This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

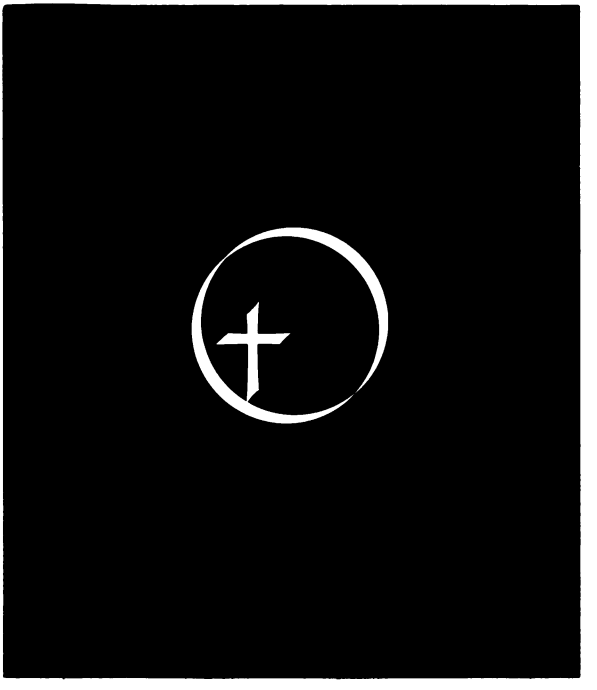
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

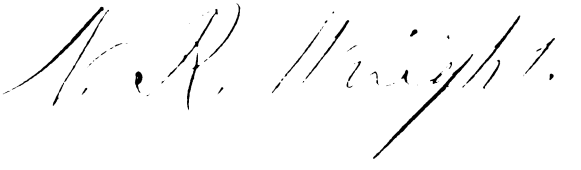
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`





CONVENTION SERMONS.

TWELVE SERMONS,

DELIVERED

DURING THE SESSION

OF THE

UNITED STATES CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS,

IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,

SEPTEMBER 15th AND 16th, 1853.

TOGETHER WITH

A PORTRAIT OF THE AUTHOR OF EACH SERMON.

Universalist Church in America. General Convention. New York, 1853.

BOSTON:
JAMES M. USHER,
1853.

BX
9943
.A1
U5
1853
cop. 1

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1853,
BY JAMES M. USHER,
in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

BAZIN AND CHANDLER, PRINTERS,
37 Cornhill, Boston.

PREFACE.

THE anniversary meetings of the United States Convention of Universalists, are occasions of deep interest, and are more numerously attended, both by the clergy and the laity, than any others. It is questionable whether, in any of the various denominations, there is a Convention, whose annual meetings call together so large a number, and from such distant parts of the country. And the people do not thus assemble in vain; they have an opportunity of hearing some of the ablest preachers in the denomination; they enjoy a season of great religious interest, a true Pentecostal time of refreshing; their social feelings are enlivened, and very pleasant acquaintances are formed with some of the most intelligent and devoted friends of the cause.

The question has often been asked, why it is, that so many attend the meetings of the United States Convention, — why they possess such a strong attraction, since it is a body having no special ecclesiastical power, and exercising no particular control over the different State organizations? The answer is found in the fact, that the attention is devoted, not so much to legislation as to preaching,

to the worship of God, and to social offices. Were the chief interest of the meetings in the council, but few excepting delegates would attend, for the masses would be satisfied by reading the published proceedings. But the chief interest is in the religious exercises and the social communings; and whatever may be thought in regard to the value of ecclesiastical legislation, if the denomination would study its real good, it must never allow the United States Convention to lose its present attractive features. The Convention is now one of our holiest bonds of union, and can never cease to be such a bond, while at its annual gatherings, ministers and people, from all parts of the land, mingle together as brethren in the worship of a common Father, and in the enjoyment of fraternal communion.

The last session of the Convention was one of special interest. The brethren in New York made all the requisite arrangements to secure a good meeting, and we think it may be safely said, that their expectations were fully realized. The attendance was large, and all the religious exercises were conducted in a spirit of true fervor. The preaching was no doubt fully equal to that of any previous occasion. The brethren who officiated received notice, some weeks before the meeting, that their services would be wanted, and consequently went prepared for their work.

Next to the pleasure of hearing the Sermons on a great occasion, is that of reading them. We feel, therefore, that we are doing a good service to the denomination, in publishing this volume, for in their present form, the Sermons

can be read by thousands who were not able to hear them. Besides, Sermons have ever been regarded as useful reading, and we think justly so regarded. While they instruct the mind, they improve the heart; while they unfold and enforce great truths, they awaken the conscience, and urge the reader to the performance of his duty. They have a sanctity which does not belong to any other productions. This is, in part, owing to the divine origin of the ministry and the nature of a sermon, and in part to the power of association. A discourse that is worthy of being called a sermon, speaks to the mind and heart, in the language of authority, and has an influence from its association with the sanctuary, with prayer, praise, and worship. True Sermons, therefore, will always be popular and useful.

The discourses composing this volume, we regard as productions fully entitled to the name of Sermons. They are not mere essays. The difference between an Essay and a Sermon is very marked, though it may not be easy to define exactly in what it consists. If we say that a Sermon is a discourse on a religious subject, our definition will not be sufficient to show wherein a Sermon differs from an Essay, for an Essay may be a discourse on a religious subject. We should be equally wanting in fulness, if we were to say, a Sermon is a discourse on a religious subject, having a text from the Bible at its head, for often there is no connection between a Sermon and its text. Neither would it be enough to say, that a Sermon is a discourse on

religion, delivered from a pulpit by a clergyman, for there are vast numbers of discourses thus delivered, that have none of the essential characteristics of a Sermon. What, then, is a Sermon? We answer: — a discourse which sets forth some revealed truth, and establishes its claim to human belief and practice. It is an essential feature, that it should treat the truth presented as authoritative, and one from which there is no appeal; and that it should seek to produce a religious conviction and life. Thus, a Sermon urges a message from God, in order to produce Christian faith and obedience. An astronomical lecture then, is not a Sermon; neither is an Essay on the formation of snow-flakes, the beauties of art, the offices of poetry, or the pleasures of a cultivated taste. A Sermon may be enriched by illustrations drawn from nature, science, art, and history; but when nature, science, art, or history, becomes the theme, the discourse loses the essential feature of a Sermon.

We not only claim for the discourses of this volume, the merit of Sermons, but we also claim for them another merit, which contributes equally to their value. They are distinctive, and the thought of each one is marked by that completeness which belongs to truth. They are not made up of negations. He who deals in negatives rather than in positives, who denies rather than affirms, has no reason to hope that his labors can be, in any considerable degree, effective for good; for it is truth alone that can change

and educate the soul. But while negatives have not power to sanctify, their influence must be well nigh equal to any system which is wanting in completeness. We need the whole truth, not a part of it; and when the whole is not preached, the mind will be left in a state of indecision, and no entire control can be gained over it. For instance: It must be true, that some will be endlessly punished, or that some will be annihilated, or that all will be saved. Now, if we say the first position is true, we can appeal to the fear of endless wo; if we say the second is true, we can appeal to the dread of annihilation; and if we say the third is true, we can urge the righteous retribution of God, and his infinite goodness. In each system, there is a completeness which gives it character, and brings the mind to a decision. Each system gives a basis on which to stand, and reveals the worst and the best in human fate, and thus makes itself bear with all its powers upon human motives. An awful uncertainty cannot answer the end of a perfect system; for it does not, and cannot, fix positively the character of God or his government, and thus can neither have the power of fear, nor of love. Thus, that preaching which does not indoctrinate in some form of faith, can never produce any marked effect. He that would build his people up in the truth, must preach the truth.

In closing, we will say, that in presenting a likeness of each preacher, we think that we have given a great attraction to the volume. The engravings are well executed, and the likenesses are pronounced good by the best judges.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I

OUR PURPOSE, (Occasional), by Rev. T. P. ABELL, of Middletown, Ct., — Delivered in Metropolitan Hall, Wednesday afternoon, September 15, - - - - - - - - - - - 13

SERMON II.

TRUTH AND ITS SANCTIFYING POWER, by Rev. O. A. SKINNER, of Boston, — Delivered in Orchard Street Church, Wednesday evening, September 15, - - - - - - - 41

SERMON III.

CHRIST THE HEIR OF THE WORLD, by Rev. A. A. MINER, of Boston, — Delivered in Bleecker Street Church, Wednesday evening, September 15, - - - - - - - - - - - 79

SERMON IV.

UNIVERSALISM NOT A DOGMA BUT A SYSTEM, by Rev. W. H. RYDER, of Roxbury, Mass., — Delivered in Murray Street Church, Wednesday evening, September 15, - - - - - 105

SERMON V.

REPROACH OF UNIVERSALISM, by Rev. H. BALLOU 2d, of Medford, Mass., — Delivered in the Hall of the Medical College, Wednesday evening, September 15, - - - - - - - 127

SERMON VI.

HOPE, by Rev. E. FISHER, of Salem, Mass., — Delivered in Williamsburg, Wednesday evening, September 15, - - - - - 151

SERMON VII.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL, by Rev. I. D. WILLIAMSON, of Louisville, Ky., —Delivered in Orchard Street Church, Thursday evening, September 16, - - - - - - - 163

SERMON VIII.

COMING TO GOD, by Rev. A. G. LAURIE, of Buffalo, N. Y., — Delivered in Bleecker Street Church, Thursday evening, September 16, - - - - - - - - - - - - - 185

SERMON IX.

INCENTIVES TO EFFORT, by Rev. S. P. SKINNER, of Chicago, Ill., — Delivered in Murray Street Church, Thursday evening, September 16, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 201

SERMON X.

SHALL I SMITE, by Rev. G. W. MONTGOMERY, of Rochester, N. Y., — Delivered in the Hall of the Medical College, Thursday evening, September 16, - - - - - - - - - - - 215

SERMON XI.

THE EXCELLENCE OF CHARITY, by Rev. THOMAS WHITTEMORE, of Cambridge, Mass., — Delivered in Brooklyn, N. Y., Thursday evening, September 16, - - - - - - - - 233

SERMON XII.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE, by Rev. MOSES BALLOU, of Bridgeport, Ct., — Delivered in Williamsburg, Thursday evening, September 16, 265

Engraved by A.B.Walter Philada.

T. P. Ubell

Printed by R. Andrews

SERMON I.

OUR PURPOSE.

BY REV. T. P. ABELL.

"For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."—ISAIAH lxii. 1.

WHATEVER room there may be for the exercise of critical skill in determining the authorship of the text, it will be regarded as sufficient for the present to say, that the language is clearly expressive of the feelings and desires of the one who employed it. It announces the settled resolution to labor for the enlargement and the prosperity of Zion — to pursue this great object without rest or cessation, "until the righteousness thereof shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

We believe, my brethren, that we may say with safety, that our desires and aims are not wholly dissimilar to those indicated in the text. We

come together, on this anniversary occasion, moved by a common impulse, animated by a common object. We meet as the representatives and members of a large and growing religious body, distinct from all other bodies, and allied only to each other and to God. We come together as a people, openly confessing the sin of sectarianism, and freely proclaiming to the world our principles and our design. Our compact is the welding of our natures by truth. Our position is that of activity. Our aims assume the dignity of a purpose. Our chief design, as a denomination, is two-fold. We remark, then,

I. That it is our purpose to assist in solving the problem whether Christianity, as a system, is a satisfactory religion, in its adaptation to the intellectual and the affectional nature of man.

We say that we are to assist in this work, for we would not arrogate to ourselves more than we may with justice claim. If there are others laboring with the same intent, we would readily share with them all incidental reproach, and accord to them all merited honor. We speak of Christianity, not as a "life," not as a "moral element," but only as a system, — as a scheme

of simple but divine doctrines. We speak of the intellectual and the affectional nature of man distinctively, for the reason that mind, as such, would be satisfied with a religion which was purely rational, while such a religion could not address itself with success to the heart — the affections. And we say that it is our aim, as a people, to throw in our contributions towards the solution of the problem whether Christianity, as a religious theory, is fully adapted to meet and answer the wants of our complex nature.

Confessedly, we are undoubtedly in the wrong in esteeming this a question which yet waits for a demonstration. Christians of every modification of belief are ready to affirm its standing and triumphant demonstration at their hands. If they have not evolved all truth, they have at least exhausted all the needed powers of analysis, and shown the sufficient adaptations of *their* Christianity. But practically, actually, all this asseveration must go for cant and confusion. Where, and what is that interpretation of the Gospel which satisfies? Where, and who are those men whose easy natures have found such rare content? When, and how were such miracles of happiness

wrought in our midst? I look in vain for such wonders, for such demonstration. I go among those who scorn to come among us; and I everywhere find mournful evidences of an unsatisfying faith. I have been, as many of you have been, by the bedsides of some of their dying saints, and sought to catch from the intimations of death, verifications of a creed whose spirit a holy life had outlived, whose truth the latest consciousness denied. It is an unfortunate hour for Christianity—an unfortunate hour for the world, when sober minded men are compelled to regard it in its more common forms as having acceptably justified and commended itself to the understanding and the heart. From such a decision, reason instinctively appeals; nor can its acquiescence be won, except its functions are perverted and debased.

Nothing, in fact, is more evident; for a large proportion of these forms of religion insist upon the rejection of reason as the fundamental condition of their acceptance. Were reason not to recoil from their embrace — were they to betray any intrinsic congeniality with this attribute, they would be directly regarded by their abettors

as carnal in influence and false in principle. In the monstrous philosophy which prevails, the simple predisposition of men to use their reason is adjudged the clearest proof, not only that they are not religious, but that they are incapable of becoming so, until they have rectified an error which originated with God, in conferring our primitive endowments: so that this great business of belief and devotion is based upon the ostensible negation of our nature.

And yet, this negation is never complete. Whatever miracle is needful to achieve conversion, it is never a miracle which fully accomplishes its work. The supernatural does not fully triumph over the natural; for after all the resources which have been so successfully applied, this enslavement of the understanding is not so thorough as to be wholly divested of the leaven of a rebellion which must generate dissatisfaction now, and, if the philosophy be true, inevitably lead to damnation in the end.

Christianity, as inculcated by Christ, and enforced by the Apostles, must have been a very simple, an essentially rational system. We do not now go to original records and facts. We

put our appeal in another direction. Christianity as now taught is not only *not* such a system, but all pretence of this kind is expressly and authoritatively disclaimed. What then is the Christianity of to-day? Whence did it come? Men tell us with immovable gravity that they teach the truths Christ taught, and that we must receive them or inherit an immortality of ill. What, then, are those truths? Suppose you seek for them under the general form of Calvinism, or the rival form of Arminianism. Could a reasonable man look grave, save through grief at the Father's dishonor, when told that one or the other of these schemes were the original Christianity? And, in mercy, which of them is so distinguished? for, you will observe, that these schemes are antagonistic in point of fact and in point of principle. The substantiation of the claims of one is consequently the rejection of the claims of the other. In favor of which, then, shall the decision of truth be given? I declare to you, that as to the result, it matters nothing, for if one or the other is Christianity, then it is a Christianity without Christ; and in its embrace we may well say, as the tearful Mary said at the grave of her Master

—"They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him."

It may be regarded as noteworthy, that whenever the friends of these schemes set forth their rival merits, and attempt to justify their respective claims to the original teaching of Jesus, they directly violate the fundamental condition upon which their acceptance with a third party is made to depend. They thus commit their systems to the pleasant work of self-repudiation. But, as often as they may be virtually disproved by their friends, in the labor of identifying them with Christianity, they are not the less urgent in their pretensions. Whence, then, did they come — this Calvinism, now so flexible in its awful certainties — this Arminianism, so inflexible in its awful uncertainties?

Speaking of them as systems simply, we are content to connect them with a general historical reference; and we say that there is not an important doctrine presented by either, whose history, as such, may not be readily traced to an age *later* than that of Jesus. Whatever they really possess of Christianity, is in no way peculiar to them, but is what they hold in common with

most or all other Christian theories. Whatever they possess in doctrine which is distinctive, has been brought into the fold and baptized as Christian, since the Apostolic era. The history of the Church is, in a large measure, the history of the process of paganizing the kingdom of God. The corruptions which the candor of history indicates, as having been engrafted upon the simplicity of the Gospel, constitute "the body and being" of these systems. If it be not so, then either historical evidence becomes a standing cheat, or Christianity an unauthenticated tradition.

It is to be observed, that these distinguishing doctrines not only possess the peculiar and positive merit of being unreasonable, so much so that the mind can acceptably receive them only through supernatural interposition, but that they also possess the merit of an irreconcilable hostility of the instincts, the wants of our affectional nature. They spread themselves over the entire field of thought and devotion — over the whole moral character of God, the work and mission of Jesus, the duties, the hopes, and the destiny of men; and the mind is everywhere tortured by

their crudities, and the heart scourged to wretchedness by their oppressions. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, although we may concede that the heart may freely and spontaneously love a Triune God, a being of whom it is impossible to have any just natural conceptions, yet it still remains difficult to discover how that heart can render the obedience required, while it escapes the imputation and the peril of idolatry. On the one hand, there is the distinct command to worship one God; on the other, there is the supposed obligation to worship three Gods as one, and one as three, each of whom is supreme, and all of whom united are no more than supreme. In this multiplication of deities, there is a proportionate distraction of the heart in the disposal of its affections; and the homage must be rendered under the apprehension that conformity to the command may be accounted scorn of the creed, or that conformity to the creed may be idolatrous before God, and on either hand there is hell.

Bewildering as is this doctrine to the intellect and the heart, it perhaps less endangers the sincerity of devotion than that of Vicarious Atone-

ment. Here, the puzzling arithmetic of divine persons, while it is still retained, is in a measure overborne by a sense of horror at the transactions in which the moral character of the Deity is inevitably involved. Reprehension of reason and the plea of mystery still leave the heart room to distrust the rectitude of the Father, who could punish the innocence of his Son for the guilt of beings himself had made totally depraved. Connected with this, are other absurdities and blasphemies too numerous and appaling, to secure freedom for the offering of an intelligent and heartfelt devotion.

That, however, to which present allusion is the most pertinent, is the doctrine of Endless Misery, for it is this whose probabilities of result bear the most directly and fatally upon the affections. Explain the philosophy of its justice as they may, and mingle with the administration of that justice as much of the glory of God as they can, there is still the unmitigated blackness of the issue, upon which no human heart can look but with the intensest horror. It is the doctrine from whose dreadful grasp we cannot escape—whose searching applications no fortunate combination

of circumstances can ever remit, can ever render otherwise than infinitely personal. It comes with the affirmations of sovereign certainty, and declares to each heart that there is no object too dear to be damned — that more or less of those you love shall be lost — that you cannot yourself fully conceive of your own exposures to the "profoundest hell." Not content with rendering the cup of life "a cruel bitter," it points you to the consummation, and calls it the day of judgment, and rends your soul with the wail that goes up from a miserable universe — the wail of parted and broken hearts — a wail which Heaven could not after hush in its halls, but by wiping out forever the last vestige of human affection!

And is this Christianity? this which all along confuses the mind and confounds the heart — which all along excites our fears and disappoints our hopes — which everywhere outrages our reason and profanes our moral sensibilities; is this the Gospel of Jesus? O tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of heathenism triumph!

We come, now, in room of all this, with a religion which is pre-eminently rational. The Gospel, as it appears to us, has been sadly misconceived. We claim no new light, no new authority. Our light is that of truth, our authority that of reason and the Word of God. We still cling to the Gospel, and find it amply sufficient. Men tell us we mistake. But we ask them to look at their own history. We ask them to take either one of their doctrines, and trace it back, and up, from creed to council and from council to creed, divesting it of the contributions and modifications of ages, until (if they shall be so fortunate) they come to Jesus; then we say to them, "Lo, it is here; we have it!" We ask them to put their finger upon a doctrine which they deem essential, of which we have not *all* that is essential. We ask them how they have reached the Trinity but by the Unity of God; Total Depravity but by Partial Depravity; Supernatural Conversion but by Rational Conversion; Endless Misery but by Limited Punishment; and so on through the catalogue, all of which, and other fundamental principles we have, but which they have not, only as corruptions. We ask them to

winnow their verbiage from our views, to restore their borrowed capital, to extract from their systems the smothered Universalism which salts them into perpetuity, and then come to us and give us the balance of their wisdom.

The Gospel, we say, is a rational religion. As a scheme of mercy

> "——— stretched infinite degress
> Beyond the tenderness of human hearts,"

it is altogether consonant with reason in all its announcements, promises and requisitions. It speaks distinctly and comprehensibly of God and his will, of Jesus and his work, of man and his wants, of life and its lessons, of evil and its end, of death and its destruction, of eternity and its measureless glory. Simple and credible at every point, accordant and harmonious as a whole, it bears with it the clearest evidence of having been designed for the guidance and the satisfaction of human reason.

It should be further remembered, that by virtue of being to this extent adapted to the intellect, it is also adapted, to a corresponding extent, to the heart. It is a merciful system. The smiles of divine benignancy run as golden threads through

its whole texture. It is reliable. It hangs no infinite issues upon the instability of human caprice. It is encouraging. It pours forth the richest consolations in the darkest hour, and predicates the removal of evil on the inevitable triumph of goodness. It is sustaining. It points with the aspect of authority to the death which shall sweep away death — to the grave of the Crucified, whence sprung man's warrant of immortality. It is enough! The revelation and the pledge of the perfected happiness of the universe, no affection can desire more — no imagination can conceive of greater good than the finished work it announces as its crowning glory.

Men may continue to call this heresy. We call it Christianity — Universalism — a rational, satisfying faith. Men may scorn it. It is none the less the hope of the world, and without which the world were damned to-day and forever.

There are those Christians who regard Christianity as "a failure." They are misapprehensive in their lamentations. Calvinism may fail, Arminianism may fail, but the Gospel, never. There are others who explain why Christianityhas done so little in eighteen hundred years. Let them

vindicate creeds, confessions, corruptions for their barrenness of good, if they can; Christianity needs no apology. It is the child of wonders. Born and nurtured in miracle, the greatest miracle of all is, that it has survived the embrace of Paganism.

There are still others, whose hopes are more sanguine, and whose work is nearer allied to our own. They aim to do justice to Christianity as a rational system. They labor to this end. They bring with them rare and gifted intellects, extensive culture, patient research, facility in critical analysis, and a most enviable rhetoric. They seek to disencumber the gospel of its burden of error. To a certain extent, they are eminently successful. But they are men whose respectability must not be too far endangered, whose boldness has its limits. It is their dream, that the heart should be content with the portion measured to the mind. But mind cares for to-day — affection never forgets the morrow. For the one they demonstrate, for the other, they conjecture. They treat the mind with stubborn syllogisms — they proffer the heart probabilities and analogies, presumptions and fallacies. They would have us

live like Christians, and hope and die like philosophers. They would sublimate our enjoyment with a psalm; they would solace our bereavement with an essay. They approach the greatest question with incongruous delicacy — the great question of future happiness or misery — with delicacy that delights in indecision. Their definiteness is negative, and refers to the number of deities worshipped — not, positively, to the number of souls saved. As to the future, they give us nothing tangible. On this point, their teaching is expert in evasion. It is the system which dodges gracefully.

Reverend Sirs ! The time has passed for mincing this matter. If Christianity be not definite, it is in vain to call it a rational system. If it *is* definite, then it is my duty, and YOURS, so to proclaim it.

Nevertheless, it is well to be thankful. It is something to render Christianity comparatively welcome to the understanding. It is a work of still greater importance to give it the character of reigning and triumphant benevolence. This is the peculiar light in which we regard it. To this work we are pledged. It is our cause. With

it is identified all that is desirable in life, all that is sustaining in death. This is our estimate. To show, as far as our labor may reach, that the Gospel fully justifies itself to our better nature — that it fully meets and satisfies the wants it unfolds — that it is to the fullest extent a rational and adequate system — is our great object and endeavor.

II. It is our purpose, also, to aid in solving the problem whether Love, as a reforming principle, is sufficient and safe.

Whether religion was designed mainly for this state or the next, it was in either case, according to general concession, designed to reform our lives and improve our hearts. The benefits of religion might be wholly present, or in a principal sense they might be future: the necessity of it is still the same, and is insisted upon by all parties.

It becomes, then, a great desideratum to ascertain the most effectual and safe means of securing reformation. As this is in fact the professed ultimate end of all religions, they must have been devised and perpetuated with this in view, however diversified were the cherished opinions

in regard to virtue, or the mode of attaining meetness for heaven. They are therefore necessitated to embody in themselves the true principle of reform, or that which is supposed to be the most efficacious.

Not stopping to indicate some of the nicer discriminations of different systems of moral science, the more prominent motives to personal amendment may be properly reduced to the two principles of Fear and Love. It is indeed sometimes said that, in a sense independently of considerations growing out of these principles, men ought to be virtuous for the sake of virtue alone. But as just or plausible as this sentiment may appear, it is still difficult to explain how men, constituted as they are, can be permanently influenced in the direction of virtue, from motives essentially disconnected from the advantages or disadvantages which may follow their action, so that we are, we apprehend, fully justified in falling back upon the principles before designated, as putting in motion the whole moral machinery of reformation.

It requires no extensive research to discover that, while the general prevailing forms of re-

ligion have differed widely in doctrine, they have been singularly harmonious in spirit. Various as may have been the speculative views entertained of God or Jesus, the present state or the future, the principle employed to superinduce correct or desired action on the part of the votaries, has been in all cases essentially the same. And it is no more than just to observe, that this is true, as a general remark, not only in respect to religions which have prevailed since, but it is true in regard to those which prevailed before, the birth of Jesus. It is not only true of a Judaism superseded by the Gospel, but of a Christianity which has well nigh superseded the Gospel, and of heathenism in common.

This principle, which has so invariably animated ancient and modern, Christian and Pagan beliefs, is that of Fear. We know not whether it is possible to indicate with justice any peculiar predominance in its manifestation. The notorious instrumentality of cruelty, debasement and woe in heathen lands, there were found the same legitimate and corresponding fruits in Christian countries, were the same disinterested candor to make due an honest confession. It springs from

a common source, for in the one case and the other it is based upon the character of a false or of a misapprehended God. It makes a common appeal to the baseness in man, and brutalizes, while it attempts to beatify him. It directs his energies in either case to the same end — the propitiation of divine anger, atonement for sin, and the purchase of Paradise.

If this principle, under the administration of the various religions distinguished by it, has sadly failed in the great work of reform, it was not for the want of power. That it had predominated and triumphed, none can deny. That it had been successful in any degree commensurate with the extent of its influence, only the madness of fanaticism can pretend. Idolatry exhibits it in its naked strength — Christianism in its borrowed glory. It has power — power among its native gods of "stocks and stones," power around the altars of civilized worship. And if it were competent, under any circumstances, to render itself useful to the extent of its pretensions, the genialities of the Gospel had long since developed that capacity. But its practical results are still deplorable — the moral life it yields is barren of beauty.

If it is not enough that we are guided to such a conclusion by the lessons of history and the investigations of reason, we have only to point to the improved spirit which seems to have found its effectual way into hearts before accustomed to a different sovereignty. It is a thing not unusual to the eye of common observation, to see men, every principle of whose religion is instinctive with fear, virtually disavow that religion, in the relations and duties of a growing philanthropy, in the multiform manifestations of an intrusive but irrepressible love.

It may be regarded as not a little remarkable, that the children of this generation should have outgrown, in any respect, the religion of their fathers. That there has been any decided improvement in doctrinal platforms, we cannot assert That signal advances have been made in the administration of moral and spiritual influences, cannot be questioned. Formerly, the fear of hell was sufficient for all the practical purposes of Christian reform and progress. To-day, the exhibition and enforcement of motives derived from this source are mainly confined to conservative pulpits and the American Tract Society. So far

as we are aware, no creeds have been changed, no codicils of concession have been annexed to them. They as before, are saturated with the fear that hath torment. But it is certain that a more amiable and beneficient spirit has infused itself into the very heart of Christian endeavor. Who will say it is not a mighty spirit, when it constrains the subservience of men to whose creeds it is alien, to whose religion it is an enemy?

Surely it were unreasonable to suppose that that spirit, in these latter days, was born of religions older in essence than the Egyptian Moloch. It cometh not by such a tardy and unnatural generation. It is of God! and was most signally manifested on earth, when "God was in Christ reconcilling the world unto himself." It is the spirit of the Gospel, of divine and universal love; and we ask those men who are so ambitious to show its mightiness in moral amelioration, while they yet hold on to faiths which repudiate it, to pluck the film from their eyes, and no longer attribute to Beelzebub the power that casts out devils. We lay no claim to their thunder; but we ask them to confess the appropriation of

the electric fire by which souls are warmed and won!

If it is with the heart that man "believeth unto righteousness," those reformers must be the most successful whose faith discloses and encourages the work of love. It is sad, this tacit quarrel between sectarian opinion and philanthropic impulse. One or the other must eventually succumb. Undoubtedly the latter will triumph. But this in earlier instances, has not apparently proved certain. Washingtonianism was suffered to die, because it was a too palpable rebuke of orthodox assumption and impotence. But Orthodoxy now furnishes too many unconscious allies to render such deaths contagious or alarming. Reforms every day become less liable to such ecclesisatical violence. Every day indicates that they will soon attain a position of safety, and if need be, of defiance.

Unlike most other religions, Universalism has no quarrel with itself—no accusations and denials bandied to and fro between the head and the heart. Benignant in theory and tendency, faith in its truths is ever suggestive of faith in good for Man. It is broader than all our wants—

mightier than our sorrows and our sins. Based in infinite benevolence, it must necessarily become effective through the ministry of love. This is its source, its nature, and its end. It inculcates no doctrine, embodies no principle, applies no motive, encourages no hope, announces no result which is not instinct with love.

That a religion so constituted and endowed is competent and safe, as a regenerating agent, it belongs to us to demonstrate. We may not suffer others to come, in the natural current of popular aspiration, to the adoption of our fundamental principle, while they persist in the rejection of the religion whence it emanates. It is our business to resist and remove the encroachments of error; to rebuke the vain philosophies of men; to be jealous of the glory of God and of his truth; to preserve, unimpaired, the integrity and simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus. It falls to us, in the pursuance of our great purpose, as the chief burden of our labor, to show the sufficiency and safety of love, not only in redeeming for earth, but in sanctifying for heaven; that by this principle there is salvation, and that without it there is *no* salvation. To this must men come,

for there is no other name given under heaven by which they can be saved. It is, we repeat, the hope of the world, and without it the world were lost in darkness and despair.

In accomplishing this work, the Bible under God, and with God, is our strongest instrumentality. Thankful for the intimations of his works and the encouraging testimonies of reason, we still cling to the Bible as the light of our faith and the guide of our practice. Respectful to the discoveries of progressive mind, we still hold to the Bible as the only divine and authoritative utterance of truth. It is the ground of our confidence, the warrant of our hope, the shield of our defence. It is the weapon which we have found mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of error. It is our attendant shekinah. It has led us through the conflicts of the past; it has brought us to behold the glory of this day; and the glory or the gloom of the future shall not turn us from its guidance. It is from this sacred fountain of truth that we draw our rational system. It is in this revelation of the Father's goodness, that we are taught the supremacy of love. We cannot qualify the im-

plicitness of our respect for it. By it we *have* won, by it we *shall* triumph.

"*Trust in God and keep your powder dry*!" was the language of a reliance upon Providence, which would admonish to the use of corresponding means for the attainment of the desired purpose. It is not enough that we have a satisfying system. It is not enough that our system is vital with a principle which must conquer. It is not enough that we find every requisite sanction in the Oracles of the Living God. It is not enough, that our past career has been marked by the most encouraging success. This enhances our obligation to trust in Divine Providence none the less, but in our own providence all the more.

The day of small things is passing away. The seed sown in tears, returning in first-fruits, give promise of an ample harvest. All around us there are signs of a propitious era: and among them all, that whose significance rises to the assurance of good, is the foretoken, no longer regarded as equivocal, of the founding of an institution which shall give to our ministry the advantages of a liberal education, in halls consecrated to the genius of Universalism. It is not

the exuberance of a fanatical fancy which contemplates this result with the most confident joy. Nothing is more fitting than that a religion so peculiarly adapted to the highest development of our mental and emotional nature, should be signalized in its ministry by the aids of the highest intellectual and moral culture. We depreciate not the past. Our weakness *has* been mighty, else it had not so multiplied the necessities for added strength and the extended application of means to opportunities. The liberality, zeal and wisdom, securing the origin and attending the conduct of an enterprise fraught with so much good to the world, cannot but receive the award of an appreciative and honorable remembrance.

To recur to our causes for gratulation and encouragement, is but to recall an occasion of bereavement and sorrow. "Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?" Alas! the hand of Time is upon us. I look in vain for the venerable man, whose presence has been with us so long, who taught us our wisdom, and gave us the benedictions of his love. He has gone! Our guardian for half a century, our counsellor whom we called FATHER, he is with us

no more. His simple manners, his goodness of heart, his fidelity to principle, his strength of reason, his love of the Scriptures, his unostentatious piety, constrained our unanimous love of his living worth, as they will also perpetuate the most unaffected reverence for his memory. Green lies the turf above him, while his name freshly lives in a million of true hearts; and, in after times, when other systems shall pass away, and other great men be forgotten, UNIVERSALISM shall hand down to the gratitude of millions more, the unperished name of — HOSEA BALLOU!

Sainted sire! animated with the great purpose which breathed through thy toils and sacrifices on earth, and ever hopeful in our labor for the Zion thou didst love, we will not rest nor hold our peace, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. AMEN.

Engraved by A.B.Walter Philada

Otis A. Skinner.

SERMON II.

TRUTH AND ITS SANCTIFYING POWER.

BY REV. OTIS A. SKINNER.

"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."—JOHN xvii. 17.

"But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have learned him, and have been taught by him the truth as it is in Jesus."—EPH. iv. 20: 21.

TRUTH is used in the Scriptures synonymously with doctrine and gospel. "Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth." "Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine, continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." Here the work of salvation is ascribed alike to truth, doctrine and gospel. By Christian truth, then, we understand that system of religion which was taught by the Saviour. I would not imply by this definition, that we find it formally stated in

the Bible, after the manner of those divines who have written works designed to give a complete body of divinity. The Great Teacher did not present first a description of God and his government, and then pass on, in a direct order, to all the doctrines and duties which he was commissioned to preach. Christianity, however, is on this account, no less a regular system; for when we examine its different parts, we find that they all belong together, and when united make a regular system. It is with the strictest propriety, therefore, called truth, for it has unity. In this idea, several things are implied; and,

1. The agreement of truth with the outward world. All that originates from an infinite mind must be in harmony with itself; for any absolute antagonism implies imperfection. Temporary antagonism, however, may exist, for by the law of opposing forces, harmonious results are often most successfully accomplished, as when by the action of heat and cold the earth is made productive. But permanent antagonism implies some radical defect, for it is force acting against force, and thus preventing the execution of any purpose. We know, therefore, that Christian truth

is in harmony with the whole arrangement of material things; for if the Bible requires that which arrays us against one of the physical laws, it is an injury to the body, mind, or heart; and that which makes such a requisition must be absolutely wrong. We may be as certain of this as we are that two statements in direct contradiction cannot both be true. But the Christian system lies under no such imputation, for it is one of its distinguishing glories, that it keeps the whole man — body, mind, and heart — in harmony with the outward world; so that while obeying Christ, we fill the place, and act the part, for which we were designed by God.

2. Truth is in harmony with man. By examining different writers on moral philosophy, we find them contradicting each other on fundamental principles. The same is true with respect to medical writers. It is no assumption, therefore, to say, that much is taught in works on moral philosophy and medicine that is directly opposed to man. If a physician understood perfectly the laws of human being, and the remedy for every disorder, he could prepare a work which would be an infallible guide in preserving health and

curing disease. That God has a perfect knowledge, not only of our physical, but of our intellectual and moral natures, needs no proof; and hence it is certain that his truth has an exact fitness to man, the same as light has to the eye, and sound to the ear. Consequently those governed by it, will be perfect in physical, intellectual, and moral stature.

3. Truth is perfect in itself. Being the production of an infinite mind, it must be adequate to answer all the ends for which it was given. It has completeness; there is no doctrine, no moral or religious rule wanting. If you add to it, you encumber, disfigure, and weaken it; if you take from it, you destroy its symmetry and perfection, and render it incapable of doing the work for which it was intended. In a fragmentary and imperfect state, it may have power and produce good, but only to a limited extent.

In these propositions, we have that only which is self-evident, providing we admit that God is the author of truth. Assuming that, I will ask your attention to its necessity in the work of sanctification. I will begin by saying, that it was given to govern our motives and actions, and holds the

same relation to us which physical laws hold to the universe. Destroy those laws, and universal ruin would ensue. All things are governed by law. Every particle of dust, and every drop of water, owns the sway of law, the same as the great system of nature. What law is to the universe, truth is to the soul — its food, its light, its support. When diseased, and blind and wretched, it is because deprived of truth; nothing else can nourish, guide, or uphold it. Human wisdom, with all its resources, has never been able to discover any way for nourishing the body, except that provided by God. Neither has any method ever been devised by which beast, bird, or fish, can live out of its native element. So nothing has ever been discovered which will serve as a substitute for truth. Men in all ages have been searching for substitutes; but those found have proved a curse in exactly the same proportion as they have been composed of error; for error poisons, cheats, destroys; it diseases the soul, and weakens its power, and wraps around it the shroud of death.

That I do not mistake the nature of truth is certain from the various figures by which it is

represented. It is said to be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; the bread of God of which a man may eat and never die; the living water of which a man may drink and never thirst; the quickening spirit which can infuse life into the inanimate soul, and the healing balm which can restore health to its prostrate powers. Thus it is in the moral world, what light, and food, and water are in the natural world; and as we could not look for a blooming earth without sunshine and rain, so we could not look for a moral paradise, without the Sun of righteousness and the dews of grace.

I would not dwell thus particularly on the relations of Truth to man, did I not see a growing disregard of it. Many speak of truth as though it were entitled to no place in the world, and had no office to perform; and not a few denounce it as a relic of antiquity, which ages ago it was found had no mission. But I would ask such, why God gave it to the world? That he did, and at an immense cost, they will not deny. Read that chapter in sacred history which records the deliverance of the Jews from bondage and their establishment in the holy land; and after

you have duly considered all the wonderful miracles and terrible judgments there detailed, tell me why all that was done, if not to have a people who should hold and defend some of the great doctrines in the vast system of truth? Pass from this chapter to the one which records the life and labors of the prophets, and tell me, why they were inspired and commissioned, and doomed to a living martyrdom, if truth has no value? As a third lesson, read the chapter pertaining to the Saviour, and tell me, why God sent his Son, clothed with our nature, in the form of a servant, and to die on the cross, if truth is worthless? Does God exert his power in vain, and send his holiest, truest, best servants to waste their energies in a fruitless toil?

There is another point which claims attention. Is it important that man should know God, the laws of his government, and the purposes of his grace? Will it be of service for man to know his origin, his relation to divine and human beings, his duties and his destiny? If so, truth is indispensable, for to know all this is to have its very substance. It is not a mere figment, a deception, but a revelation of that which *is* — a

mirror in which we see God and Christ as they are — a transcript of all that is divine. If then, truth is not essential, to know God is not essential, ignorance is as valuable as wisdom, and a vacant mind is as highly blessed as one stored with all the riches of divine knowledge.

"But why," you may ask, "do I labor to prove the worth of Truth? Who has declared it valueless? Who! Why, look at the Episcopal Church, and you find thousands among its members who say openly, that they have no faith in its doctrines, but support it because they like its forms! A very large proportion of the money which sustains partialism is paid by those who deny its fundamental doctrines. But they are not alone in their low estimate of truth. Almost ever since the Unitarians have been known as a sect, they have been constantly preaching, that it is immaterial what men believe! Why, they have asked, contend for doctrines, for modes of faith? Singular questions these; for if it makes no difference, why disturb old landmarks? why denounce Calvinism, total depravity, the trinity, vicarious atonement? Why build Unitarian churches, or have a Unitarian ministry and press?

I would not say that they are dishonest; but I will say there is a sad want of consistency, and a very frequent shifting of positions; for when any doctrines stand in their way, the cry is—it makes no difference what men believe, but when some are disposed to choose between different systems, Unitarianism instantly becomes an essential doctrine!

I have no favor for the idea, that it makes no difference what faith we cherish. Look at France — when it denied God, the people became another race — they ceased to be human and acted like fiends. Is it as well to be an idolator, as a theist? a deist as a Christian? Is Mohammedanism as good as Christianity? But those who urge the error under consideration, usually connect with it the remark, *if we act right.* Hence the expression — "It is immaterial what a man believes, if he only acts right." What is action, but the effect of faith? The farmer believes that if he sows he will have a harvest; the mariner believes that his ship will carry him safely over the sea; and thus faith rules. It is so in everything we do, when not guided by actual knowledge. To expect correct action from

a false faith, is to reverse the order of things, and make a man act without motive and against judgment. How is it then, you may ask, that men of such opposite creeds, bear so strong a moral resemblance? I answer, the bad parts of their creed are sometimes inoperative; and if it were always thus, there would be less need of contending against error; but the dark, bloody history of the church, shows that its false doctrines have often made cruelty and revenge the characteristics of the professed followers of Christ. Some are so happily constituted, that they will live a holy life, in spite of a false creed. But this is no reason for tolerating error, for in proportion as it exerts a sway, men are bad.

We see the same intimate connection between faith and action in all that pertains to human conduct. How can a man worship God, unless he believes in him? How can he love God, unless he believes him to be supremely good? How can he have a divine standard of duty without a divine rule? How can he have a hope in a future life, unless that life is revealed? We walk by faith, not by sight, and our walk is according to our faith.

The error before us assumes various forms. Sometimes it eschews theology, and declares it hateful. "We want no theology," say some, "give us religion and we are satisfied." This is unaccountable talk for Christians. Without theology what can we know of God or the science of divine things? A writer who had keenly felt the evil influence of this error, says — "Theology is the science of the Being of whose existence all truth is the reflection, of whose energy all life is the expression, of whose love all enjoyment and all hope are but streams continually fed from their source." How then can it be hateful? The same writer thus describes a man without theology. "He of course believes nothing about God, nothing about Christ, nothing about the elements or sanctions of morality, nothing about immortality. He must not declare himself to be either a Trinitarian or a Unitarian, for then he would stray into the forbidden ground of theology. But further, he must eschew not deism or pantheism only, but theism also, for that lies on the other side of the prescribed line. He may have his notions about worldly affairs and political events; he may store his mind with all sorts

of knowledge except religious; knowledge he may be just as good and spiritual as he can be without any faith in things divine; but the moment he attempts to vindicate his spirituality or strengthen his goodness by a recurrence to the great truths of the universe on which angels feed, and which in Christ become the bread of life to every believer, a voice of solemn admonition cries — Beware, that is the perilous domain of theology, full of briers and forests, where you will lose yourself or become the prey of fierce sectarians; go not there as you value either comfort or improvement." *

This is no overdrawn picture — it has no false colorings, but is true to life; for he that shuts out theology from his mind, is without God, and in a world void of all that is moral and religious. God is the source of all truth; and the soul ignorant of him can see no relation between law and the Lawgiver, government and the Governor, salvation and the Saviour. He has no lines that lead him back to a first cause, the great centre from which all things proceed and with which all things are connected.

*Christian Examiner.

Perhaps it may be said, I do injustice to those who denounce theology, inasmuch as they demand religion, and find in that the life and strength which they need. I grant that they praise religion, and urge its claims with feeling and zeal. But what is left of the Christian religion, after all theology is taken from it? When employed with reference to Christianity, religion can be used only in three senses, one to denote faith in God and the Gospel, true worship and godliness, and the practice of all moral duties — another to denote simply piety and virtue — and another to denote merely the duties we owe directly to God. The first sense it will be seen, embraces the other two; and theology constitutes one of its principal features. We suppose therefore, that when religion is demanded, and not theology, the meaning is — urge piety and virtue, and let doctrines alone. But even in this sense religion has an intimate connection with theology; for piety is unmeaning if there is no God, and virtue a mere ideality unless there are fixed and divine laws. In principle, piety is veneration and love for God, and practice *it* is the exercise of these affections in obedience to his will and devotion to his service.

How then, can religion and theology be separated? Obedience implies a being to obey — veneration implies a being worthy of homage. It is equally impossible to make virtue entirely distinct from theology; for virtue implies the existence of a law to which our actions must conform; but a law without a lawgiver is an absurdity. We cannot then, have religion without theology.

It may be argued in opposition to this, that religion is sentiment, experience, love. These are often put forth as its very essence; and we are pointed to those who have the faith of the affections; persons without doctrines, belief, or knowledge, and yet having hearts that glow with goodness, that are all alive with piety and devotion. No theory could be more radically false than this; it separates the mind from the heart, and supposes that the latter can feel and love without the help of the former. It gives to the mind no office, and makes great saints without mind; but while it does this, it will not allow theology to gain admission to the heart, and find a home among the affections. The heart feels deeply, powerfully, but what makes it? Shall we say, it is fed from itself, generates its own

life, kindles its own fire — glows and beats and burns with love, without anything to act upon it? Do you say the affections see and believe? I ask, see what? believe in what? Do you reply in God and Christ, in a watchful and merciful Providence, in goodness, grace and compassion? Then I reply — Grant that the heart can act separately from the mind, it depends for the activity of its religious affections upon truths which sway them, and truths which make the substance of theology. I must be right here, for what is sentiment but a feeling awakened within the heart, by the influence of some truth or being upon us? Gratitude is a sentiment; but in order to have it kindled within us, we must believe that some one, from the dictate of benevolence, is seeking to bless. It is not enough that favors come to us — they must come from one who desires to aid. We feel no gratitude to the sun which shines upon us, or the tree which yields us fruit. Not all the beneficent action of nature's laws can produce gratitude, unless we see them to be the laws of a wise and benevolent Being. Hence the religious sentiments cannot be awakened without the agency of Christian doc-

trine. If the mind need not see what the gospel reveals, the heart must, so that theology is the grand cause of the spiritual life. I cannot dismiss this error without confirming my views by a quotation from Paul, showing not only the necessity of the gospel, but the agency of the mind in giving it sway over the heart. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that is, the word of faith which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

It may be argued in reply to this, that the ignorant have faith — that some of the best Christians may be found among those who cannot defend a single doctrine they believe. We grant this, but we ask, why are they Christians? They have heard and believed. To them God is a Father, Governor, Saviour, and they love him; the gospel is a divine message, and they believe it; heaven the eternal home of the spirit, and they look forward to it with hope. Go to them

with your doubts and difficulties and criticisms, and though they cannot answer them, they will say, we are certain that the gospel is true; for we have tried it in sickness and health, and we know its worth; blessed has been its influence, holy the feelings it has awakened, divine the strength it has imparted, and pleasant the path in which it has led; and we are as sure of its value, as of any earthly blessing. Here is true experience, and this is the only way that we can test the gospel by experience. It is impossible to have a spiritual experience without the truths of Christianity. By applying them to the heart, and making them the rule of life, we know their reality and worth. The infidel has no such experience, and he cannot have, for unbelief prevents him from bringing Christianity to this test. He may know that the world has no power to satisfy the aspirations of the soul, and yield him support in sorrow; he may also know that philosophy with all its boasted wisdom, cannot give him the light which his prying mind craves; but he does not know what Christianity can do, for he has not tried it. Thus theology is essential to spiritual experience; and to expect experience without it,

is like asking a man to construct a building without materials.

The objector perhaps, will reply to all this by saying, "Religion is a life; and what need we more than a holy life? And why disturb a man, whatever his views, if his life is Christian?" In one sense, I grant that religion is a life. James says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Here is the moral part of religion — its practice so far as it relates to human beings and the world. But would he exclude piety, faith and hope? Did he mean that worship was not included in religion, and that we can be perfect without love for God? This question shows that he was speaking of only one part of the practice of religion, instead of religion in its most comprehensive sense. The language of the Saviour shows this, — when he says, all the law and prophets hang on two commandments, one requiring us to love God with all our soul, and the other to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We might then as well say religion is a song, or a prayer, as a life, for the

Christian sings and prays. I shall not by these remarks, I trust, be supposed to undervalue a holy life. I prize it highly as any can, and I never gaze upon a picture of it, however poorly drawn, without admiring it, and blessing God for its supreme worth. Still, I cannot allow that religion is a life, and nothing more. But even if it were, the fact would give no support to those who discard theology, for how can you have the life without the means of its production? Sanctify them through thy truth. Here are the means. "Born again of the word," says Peter. Thus the Christian life is the production of Christian truth; and if you destroy the cause, you will look in vain for the effect.

The foregoing considerations show, that look at the error which discards theology in any light we can, and we have effects without cause. Not only so; we have love but no being to love, worship but no being to worship, obedience but no being to obey, life but no rules for its formation. The error is at war with all we know, without a single philosophical element, finding support in no department of the world; for when we would make one a philosopher, we teach him philos-

ophy, an astronomer we teach him astronomy. Why not then, when we would make a man a Christian teach him Christianity? How can we accomplish the object in any other way? In what besides truth can the soul find salvation, life, and hope?

This agency of truth in the domain of mind and heart, corresponds with all the arrangements of the material world. In its various departments, we find means suited to ends — truth achieving the most stupendous results. Enter with me into a hall of art, where genius has gathered some of its proudest works. Look at them; see that picture of despair, and that one of ambition, and that of conquest. On the right are landscapes, and as you gaze at them, you see old and familiar scenes, where you have sailed and sported with fond companions. On the left are portraits, and among them you see the great and good with whom you were once familiar. How often have you lingered in this enchanted place, studying and admiring its splendid productions. But what gives them value? That portrait of an old friend, why do you linger by it, with such intense feeling? That beautiful landscape of

your native home, why starts the tear as your eye surveys its mountains, meadows and streams? The answer is — you behold truthful representations — the painter has transferred to the canvas that with which you are familiar, and which you love; and just in proportion as he has done this, you prize his works.

A few years since, an humble man launched in your noble harbor a steam vessel, with which he said he would navigate your rivers without wind or canvas. The people gathered around the wharves in great crowds, to laugh and sneer at the failure of the poor dreamer. The structure was coarse, the machinery imperfect, for as yet he knew not the whole truth in relation to his great design. But still his vessel moved, his experiment was successful, and now what have we? Proud steamers on nearly all the navigable rivers of the world. There was truth in the dreamer's mind, and that truth has worked the mighty change which we witness!

Go back a few years in the history of our country, and as you pass up and down our rivers, you see no manufactories with their whirling spindles and flying shuttles. At length dream-

ers began to have visions of machines for carding, spinning, and weaving, and of mills for the performance of all kinds of work, and now all over our land you find machinery toiling for man. Laws have been brought into service which have produced an entire change in the modes of labor, and in the condition of our country. Thus, the moment the truth was seen and applied, the vast revolution was affected.

How mighty is the agency of truth! Each department of life has its appropriate laws by which the good of society is promoted. Now, who can believe that the moral and Christian departments of life are exceptions to all others? that in the material world, means are fitted to ends, but not in the world of mind and heart? God has not been thus true to our temporal interests, and false to our spiritual interests, but he has provided amply for all. Truth, then, is to man, what the sun is to the world — to the spiritual domain what physical agencies are to physical domain. With divine truth, therefore, we cannot dispense. To disown it, or attempt success without it, is like disowning the sun, like rejecting mechanical laws, like refusing the co-

operation of nature. There is no other agent by which the world can be sanctified.

If truth is the divinely appointed agent for the culture of the mind and heart, it becomes a matter of the highest moment, that it should be preached in all its completeness. It is not enough that some truths should be enforced; we need them all. He who made man knows all his wants and faculties; and in giving his truth he had regard to them all, so that when the truth is preached only in part, some want of man is left unsupplied, some faculty is neglected. We are all prone to rely on our own wisdom, and choose our own agencies, rather than those which God has provided. It is strange that such should be our course, when everything in nature is a demonstration of God's wisdom. Look at light. So ethereal is it, that we cannot see its particles, and yet, it makes the world luminous, and renders objects perceptible to the sense of seeing. Consider the atmosphere; its several gasses are in the exact proportions best suited to our health; and though its weight is immense, it is so constituted that we do not feel its pressure. The same wis-

dom is seen everywhere. What perfection in our physical nature, in its fitness to the outward world, and to the great purposes of human being. God made all things perfect, the rose, the leaf, each spire of grass. Why, then, are we so disposed to distrust God? Why, in every age, have men been so unwilling to work with the agency which God has furnished, for the culture of the soul? Instead of employing the whole truth, we take only a part. One says doctrine is the only thing essential — another, that precept is. One says Christian rites are of no service, — another, that they are the main things. From one minister we hear but little save endless misery, — from another but little save universal salvation. With one the Trinity is the chief theme, — with another the divine Unity. One sees no evil except in slavery, another none except in intemperance, and another none except in war. There are but few who have not a hobby — we get one idea, and think that that embodies all wisdom, goodness and power; and thus truth is preached only in part.

In order to see the error of this, consider the intimate connection between doctrine and pre-

cept. "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," — "Merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful," — "Be ye holy for I am holy." Love your enemies, for God makes the sun shine on the evil and the good. Here we see how closely doctrine and precept are united. The character of God explains and gives force to precept. We see in him the standard of duty, the perfection of excellence; and we cannot resist the conviction, that we should be like him, and that he has a right to demand our obedience. We see, too, that he is just, holy and good, that what he requires is the essence of excellence. Thus doctrine and precept are inseparable. Doctrine unfolds the nature of God, — precept enforces the duty of loving him. Doctrine explains the principles of the divine government, precept enforces the duty of conforming to it. Doctrine shows me whose I am, what I am, and what my destiny, — precept inculcates the duties growing out of my origin, my nature, and my destiny. Precept is the hand which guides the way, — doctrine is the power which prompts us to walk therein. Precept shows what I ought to do,—doctrine explains the grounds of my obliga-

tion. Neither doctrine, nor precept, then, can accomplish much alone. Doctrine alone may make a theologian, but cannot perfect the life. Precept alone may make man wise in regard to duty, but it can do only a little towards prompting to its performance. Precept is the guide, — doctrine the motive power.

There is another consideration of equal weight with the foregoing. The commission which we have, is to preach the *Word* — to go into all the world and preach the *Gospel.* You will observe that the command is not, preach simply doctrine; neither is it, preach simply precept, but the *Word* — the *Gospel.* Now, when we select from it only such parts as suit our taste, we do not preach the Gospel, — we preach only an invention of our own, composed of detached parts of the Gospel. I do not, of course, mean, that in every sermon all parts of the Gospel must be preached; but that a minister must labor to bring out the whole truth as opportunity may present, so that his people will be thoroughly instructed.

This is the only philosophical view that can be taken of this subject; for unless the whole truth is preached, all the faculties of the soul will not be

educated, all the passions will not be governed, all the moral and spiritual interests of life will not be guarded. Great evils often result from educating one faculty. Take, for instance, a stern father. He has a severe look, a severe tone, a severe rod. The consequence will be, sternness in his children; they will be unfeeling, obdurate, destitute of the finer sensibilities, and like the government under which they are trained. As another instance, take a parent who is mild, tender, yielding, whose mercy is weakness, whose government is without firmness or character, and you will find that his children will be effeminate, possessed of no energy, no manliness, no nerve. We see in the Puritans an illustration of the same point. Their God was stern and arbitrary, a Sovereign rather than a Father, more of a despot than a governor; and his glory was separate and distinct from the good of his people. The Puritans had the same traits of character,—they were rigid, cold, stern, as void of mercy and love as the God they adored.

It will not do, then, to educate only one part of our nature, the whole must be educated. In war combativeness is unduly developed, so that

fighting is loved and blood is sweet. In consequence of this, some think that combativeness should receive no culture, and that we should do all in our power to curb it, and render it inactive. But were man thus trained, he would have no courage or boldness, and instead of maintaining, he would yield the right. There is no object for which we can labor, I care not how benevolent and good it may be, which will not subject us to opposition. We need courage, then, to resist those who array themselves against the right, and make us firm and undaunted in virtue's cause. Courage! What would Paul or Jesus have been without it? Take it from the statesman, the minister, the physician, the philanthropist, the reformer, and he is a timid being, who shrinks back from his work the moment opposition arises. He only can be truly successful who has the courage that can face danger, and stand unblanched before the eye of a vindictive foe. God has given no faculties which are not useful. Self-esteem is useful, though when unduly active, we have inordinate pride, and an extravagant opinion of ourselves. Love of approbation is useful, though when largely developed, we have

more vanity than reason, and think more of praise than principle. Thus, all the faculties should be educated, that the character may be well balanced. Hence we need the whole truth, that we may be bold, but not contentious; gentle, yet firm; merciful, yet just, and thus be formed after the stature of Christ.

At one time, the Greeks paid their whole attention to physical education. They had schools for training the body, but none for training the mind or heart. Their youth could run, leap, wrestle and fight, but their minds were dwarfed and narrow, and their hearts hard and cold. We often see in the Christian world an education equally partial and defective. God for ages was regarded as a Being of infinite cruelty, an almighty, unfeeling sovereign, smiting down one and raising up another, cursing some with endless agony for his own glory, and raising some to endless bliss to gratify his arbitrary will. Under the reign of such a theology, benevolence could have no home in the heart, and men were strangers to the sweet charities of religion. Governments had the characteristics of the theology — they were cruel, partial, vindictive. Rulers were

without mercy, judges destitute of justice, and prisons places where fiends sported with human beings! The moment this theology began to change its character, governments changed also; and they have grown mild and humane in proportion as barbarous dogmas have disappeared. How, then, can we dispense with the doctrine, that God is the Infinite Father, the Righteous Governor, and the Eternal Friend of all men? We need it, in order that Governments may be just and man merciful, that cruelty may find no home on earth, and the good of all be equally sought and protected.

War and slavery have for centuries on centuries cursed the earth, because the doctrine has not been preached and realized, that all men are brethren, having the same rights, powers, aspirations and destiny. The Jew did not regard the Greek as a brother, and hence he hated him, and cursed him. We have all been Jews, and have looked upon other nations as fit objects of prey. When we see in every man a brother, we shall treat all with justice and humanity.

We have another illustration of the necessity of the whole truth in the former sway of intem-

perance. Go back thirty years, and you find that the awful curse was universal in the church and out of it. Grave divines, who could defend with ability all the points of Calvinism, could carry as many bottles as any man of the world. Church members, who would pray long, and zealously defend the creed, were ardent lovers of the cup. Never was there a more strange mixture of piety and rum, praying and drinking, of the Spirit of God and the spirit of ruin! Preaching temperance, bringing out this long neglected feature of the Gospel, has almost driven the evil from the church. Thus we must have all the truth, all its doctrines, and all its moral and religious duties, in order that we may be created in the likeness of Jesus.

According to the foregoing views, we must be faithful students of the New Testament, for from that alone can we learn the whole truth. Hence the striking and emphatic language of Paul,—*Have heard Christ, and been taught by him the truth as it is in Jesus.* We cannot weigh these words with too much care, for they have a meaning of vast import, and teach a lesson of special

need. The truth as it is in Jesus — not in Moses or the Prophets — not in Socrates or Plato — not in any human being, but as it is in Jesus. Let us survey it that we may know what to preach.

1. In him truth is unmixed with error. You hear nothing of three gods in one, God wreaking his vengeance on Christ, God punishing the innocent instead of the guilty. Neither do you hear any thing of a punishment infinite in degree and endless in duration, for the offences of a finite creature, actuated by an inherited nature totally corrupt. His truth was not thus burdened and darkened by error. Of no other teacher can this be said as of Christ. While the Jews had many great and glorious truths, they also had many hurtful errors, and by those errors they made void the law. The old philosophers taught much truth, but mixed with it was a vast amount of error, and hence the fact that their teachings had so little influence for good. The error in them neutralized the truth. The same difficulty has existed among the different sects of the church. All have taught many noble and glorious truths, but in connection with them they

have taught many hurtful errors. Jesus was a true miner, who gathered only the pure gold. His mind, like the magnet, drew to itself only that of a kindred nature.

2. The truth in Christ is complete. According to him God's love is equal to his power; his mercy equal to his justice. He is not only the Almighty God, but the infinite Father; not only the Omnipotent Ruler, but the merciful Friend; not only the Righteous Judge, but the gracious Saviour. Though his throne is built on equity, his face beams with benignity; though men are the subjects of punishment, they are the objects of grace; and thus while sin involves us in evil, the rights of all are defended, and the eternal interests of the world are under the protection of a Providence which never sleeps. We shall see still farther the completeness of the truth in Christ, if we consider the several institutions of his religion. He gave a new and higher significance to the day for rest and worship, than it had ever received. He consecrated the ministry to a work so noble, so great, so important, that it should have the love and support of all men. He insisted upon worship as an honor due to

God, and as a means of grace essential to the spiritual life and culture of mankind. He showed the eternal basis of the marriage covenant, and urged with his peculiar fidelity and power, the holy, tender, and endearing duties which it enjoins. Instead of giving intimations that the time would come when men would reach a perfection that would render these several institutions useless, he showed that they belonged as much to the highest forms of civilization as the lowest; and that the millenial age would be a realization of their blessings in full perfection. We find the same completeness in the truth of Christ, when we consider its moral duties. There is no evil which it does not enjoin. Though we have risen to a state as it respects government, social equality, and moral excellence of which the enslaved people of his times had no conception, we have not risen above the standard which he established, and we can see no wrongs which he did not condemn, and no virtues which he did not enjoin. To his vision the whole moral world was open; and he saw not only all that was, but all that should be, and gave laws that would guide our steps in the highest spheres of human *being.*

Thus Jesus saw the whole truth, all its blessings, relations, depths and heights; and as presented by him it was entire, symmetrical, each part having its proper place.

3. The truth in Christ, was truth illustrated by perfect character. He was the image of God, the brightness of the divine glory. Morally he was God incarnate, and in him we see God's love, mercy, grace, and compassion. By looking at him, I understand the full meaning of his language, when he declares that God is a Father, when he talks of the love of God, and his care for man. So too, when I look at him, I see what it is to be perfect as God is perfect, holy as he is holy, merciful as he is merciful. I see what it is to overcome evil with good, to render blessing for cursing, to do by others as I would have them do by me. I see also what it is to love an enemy, how I must forget myself, my wrongs and injuries and insults, how I must toil, and pray, and suffer for him. I see what it is to work for God — that it is to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and extend the conquests of truth over lands desolated by error, and cursed by sin. It is to break fetters, unloose burdens, enlighten igno-

rance and save the sinful. The truth in Jesus—in his character and life! What is so glorious, beautiful, and perfect!

4. The truth in Christ is truth direct from God—it is God's word spoken through his Son. It is not merely what reason can approve—what commends itself to our judgment and affections—what has a fitness to the condition of society; it is all this, and more; it is what God has given to enlighten and guide, and what he has made obligatory upon us. Thus truth in Christ has not only the force of truth when judged by the understanding, but it has likewise the authority of supreme law as coming from that being who is the rightful Law-giver of the soul. That we might see its authority, Christ unsealed the blind eye, unstopped the deaf ear, gave feet to the lame and life to the dead; he did works which no one could do without the help of God. Thus by his supernatural works he proved himself the special servant of God, divinely commissioned to proclaim the truth. No matter then, if he discoursed about things within the veil; no matter if he talked of God and heaven, and revealed what the unaided eye could not see, being with

the Father, and the Father with him, he was qualified to speak, and could in verity say, I speak the words of the Father; the words which I hear him speak, the same declare I unto you.

Hearer! what a teacher is Christ! How glorious is the truth in him! His commission was such as no man ever had; and hence the power of his truth. And hence truths that had been preached for ages without effect, were clothed with a divine efficacy when they dropped from his lips. Let us listen to him, that our hearts may be sanctified. Let us spread his religion abroad among all nations, that all may be sanctified.

Engraved by A F Walter Philada.

A. A. Miner

SERMON III.

CHRIST THE HEIR OF THE WORLD.

BY REV. A. A. MINER.

"Whom he hath appointed heir of all things." — HEB. i. 2.

ONE of the most striking characteristics of the Holy Scriptures is their announcement of the highest truths in language of the greatest simplicity. When the sacred historian would record the fiat of Omnipotence by which darkness should be no more, his language is, "And God said, let there be light, and there was light."[1] St. Paul, also, having opened his epistle to the Hebrews in the most terse and dignified terms,— "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us

[1] Gen. i. 3.

by his Son,"—places before us, at a single stroke of his pen, and in language of the most perfect simplicity, the entire grasp of the Divine purpose in sending his Son into the world, by adding, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things."

Were we called upon to consider, in this language, a human bequest, we should find it of consequence to notice not only the bequest itself, but the validity of the transaction by which it is made, and its bearing upon general interests. If the legacy were found to be an unquestionable good; if the legator were rightfully possessed of the same, and made the conveyance lawfully, and if there were no impediment to the efforts of the legatee to take possession of the inheritance, then would the transaction excite its full measure of interest.

But it is no human bequest with which we are now concerned. And since the Deity himself is the legator, we need employ no words to show that he is rightfully possessed of the things of which he makes Christ the heir. Is he not the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and of all things therein? Does he not say, "All souls are mine"?[1] In making Christ "heir of all

[1] Ezek. xviii. 4.

things," therefore does he not convey to him what is his own to bestow?

Nor is there room to doubt the validity of the appointment itself. In human transactions, there must be conformity to existing laws, in default of which, human bequests are invalid. But God is a law unto himself. Christ is "heir of all things" by his sovereign appointment. He, whose right none can question, — who "doeth his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and to whom none can say, what doest thou,"[1] — he need regard no other law. His will is law, and makes valid every transaction of his hand. We pass to consider, then, the inheritance itself.

The "all things" of which Christ is made heir, are doubtless all souls. Whatever the doctrine which may result from this position, however important that doctrine may be, and however opposed to the current theology of the world, it cannot set aside the position itself. Nor can any of those methods be deemed successful, by which it is attempted to bring the universality of this phrase under suspicion. When

[1] Dan. iv. 35.

it is said, that, rigidly construed, "all things" must embrace the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea, and even inanimate objects, it is obvious to reply, that the phrase is limited by the nature of the case, and by that alone. It must embrace the entire class of things included in Christ's mission, and no more. When Christ bade his disciples "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," [1] there could have been no doubt as to the proper limit of the phrase "every creature;" — it must have signified "every creature" capable of being instructed in the Gospel, or all mankind.

That the whole human race is included in the inheritance of Christ, is further seen in the prophetic announcement of this heirship, as involved in the divine purpose recorded by the Psalmist, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." [2] We shall scarcely perceive the full significance of this language, unless we bear in mind the circumstances under which it is used. The promise is of the Messiah

[1] Mark xvi. 15. [2] Psalms ii. 8.

through whom all the nations of the earth shall be blest. But this announcement is given to Israel through David their King. The Jews did not doubt that the blessings of the expected Messiah would come to them. This announcement, therefore, would extend their thought to the remotest nations of the earth. The spirit of it is, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee," not the Jews only, but "the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Thus all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, or, as we have before expressed it, all souls, constitute the "all things" to which Christ hath been appointed heir. These shall be his inheritance, — a spiritual possession.

But it must not be forgotten that there are different degrees and styles of possession. Some things are ours by natural right; the atmosphere, for example, and the sunlight. Others are ours, because we have acquired them, and hold them in actual possession. Such are our personal effects in general. And yet other things are ours by the forms of law. Deeds of conveyance, and certificates of stock constitute our actual possession in these cases; while, in consequence of the

reverses of business and the overturns in trade, the things represented thereby, not unfrequently, utterly lose their value. Thus our seeming possessions are often shadowy and unreal; and the law by which we hold them must continually vary in form, according to the nature of the possession itself.

What wonder, then, when a human soul becomes the subject of possession, if it must be held by a law applicable to none of the possessions of this world. It is a spiritual inheritance, and can be held only by a spiritual law; a law, it may be, applicable to all spiritual beings; extending throughout the spiritual domain of the universe; and by which Christ may be ours, as we are his. It is the law of the affections. To possess a human soul, is to possess its affections. This is in accordance with the language of common life. When one individual has won the affection of another, he is accustomed to say, "His heart is mine," basing his claim to the possession upon the law of love.

This, clearly, is the highest style of possession. However, by the forms of law, a master may be declared to be the owner of a slave, and however

efficient that law may be, in securing possession of his body, if the master has not the affection of his slave, his possession is very imperfect. He cannot fully command even his physical powers; and the alienated heart of the slave may make the possession itself of little value, if it shall not destroy it altogether.

Suppose each of two widowed mothers has a son who is her only support. The one proves wayward, unloving, and unfaithful, and is a perpetual grief to the maternal heart. The other is upright and faithful, prompted continually by the warmest filial love, and is all that a fond mother can desire. Though each in a sense possesses a son, yet it is by widely different laws. Beyond the natural and legal relations sustained by each, the one is bound to his parent by the strong ties of affection; while the other is alienated by the rankling power of hate. The one, therefore, has a son indeed, — holds him by the highest possible law, — a law which lays his entire powers, both of body and soul, under tribute for her comfort and welfare. The other has no son. Nor is she happy enough to be simply

childless; she has, instead, an enemy, a burden, a perpetual woe.

These illustrations will be easily applied to the subject in hand. The nations of the earth are given to Christ as a spiritual inheritance. He shall possess this inheritance by a spiritual law — the law of the affections. This, we have seen, is the highest style of possession. Strictly speaking, indeed, there is no other actual possession. Philosophically considered, this is apparent from the fact that spirit everywhere controls matter. Historically, too, wherever control has been asserted, which has not been accepted by the affections of those subjected thereto, to their consciousness it has been tyranny, whatever may have been its absolute character. And still more decisive is the language of Paul to the Romans, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his." [1]

The distinguishing glory which Christ shall thus attain in winning to himself the affections of the moral universe, implies no alienation of affection from God. Christ and the Father do not occupy antagonistic positions here. Indeed,

[1] Rom. viii. 9.

Christ comes the representative of the Father; "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" [1] and it is in this representative character that he will take possession of his spiritual inheritance. His own language,—"I and my Father are one," [2]—is applicable to this great purpose, to win the heart of the world to the moral attributes which constitute him the Father's representative. And as these attributes, as well as this purpose, are the same with Father and Son, when the world shall be won to Christ, it shall be won unto God. So that when Christ shall have taken full possession of his spiritual inheritance, the first great commandment,—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," [3]— will be universally obeyed. Christ will have entered upon the highest possession of his inheritance, and man will have come to the enjoyment of highest salvation.

Thus, notwithstanding the brevity of the text, it undoubtedly involves the whole scope of Christ's mission. The most common Scripture expressions bearing upon that mission, such as,

[1] Heb. i. 3. [2] John x. 30. [3] Matt. xxii. 37

"he should taste death for every man;"[1] he "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;"[2] "by his stripes we are healed;"[3]— all involve little else than the principles now before us. Christ's toils, privations, sufferings, and death, became the occasions for the manifestation of the moral power with which he was clothed; and it is by this power that he shall win to himself the affections of men, and enter into possession of his inheritance. Hence, he says, alluding to the death he should die, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."[4] The metaphysical exactness of this language, in its conformity to the leading thought now before us, is well worthy of notice. Were the method by which he should bless mankind a mechanical one, — a formal satisfaction of the claims of the Divine law upon the guilty, — the Saviour would scarcely speak of *drawing* all men unto him. Such language is expressive of the moral force and beauty alone, shining forth in all his sufferings and especially from the cross, by which the hearts of men shall be attracted to him-

[1]Heb. ii. 9, [2]1 Tim. ii. 6.
[3]1 Pet. ii. 24. [4]John xii. 32.

self, consummating thereby his entrance upon his spiritual inheritance.

Turn to Paul's language to the Romans, and its beautiful conformity to the same general thought will be quite apparent. "For the promise that he should be the *heir of the world* was not to Abraham, or his seed, through the law," that is, through perfect obedience to the law, "but through the righteousness of faith."[1] "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."[2] His faith in God led to trust in him, and all the beautiful graces of the devout heart, shone forth in his countenance. His, therefore, "was the righteousness of faith." His seed, too, who was appointed to become the "heir of the world," was an inheritor of the same righteousness. The same faith dwelt in his heart, and was fruitful, in the highest degree, of the graces of a true life. This "righteousness of faith" was at once the condition, and the instrumentality, of his inheritance. It was the condition of his inheritance, because it was a personal qualification, therefore; and it is the instrumen-

[1] Rom. iv. 13. [2] Rom. iv. 3.

tality by which he shall take possession of it, because it is the life-principle of all those manifestations of heavenly love, by which he shall "draw all men unto him." But men attracted or drawn unto Christ by the "righteousness of faith" manifest in him, will themselves come to possess the "righteousness of faith," and thus become assimilated to the moral condition of the Master.

Indeed, look upon the New Testament page where we will, and in one form or another this truth is written there. The apostle assures us that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."[1] This Divine work is not only identical with that involved in the appointment of which the text speaks, but is the same with that to which the Saviour alludes in the petition which followed his last conversation with his disciples; "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19.

him."[1] Giving eternal life to all flesh, and reconciling the world unto God, and inheriting the world through the righteousness of faith, are but varying statements of the same mediatorial work, — the work preparatory to the exercise of that universal dominion, which inspired the Psalmist with visions of surpassing glory and blessedness. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . . Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. . . . . His name shall endure forever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and amen."[2] The poet's paraphrase of this prophecy breathes its true spirit.

"Kings shall fall down before him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore him,
His praise all people sing;

[1] John xvii. 1: 2. [2] Psalm lxxii.

For he shall have dominion
O'er river, sea and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion,
Or dove's light wing can soar.

O'er every foe victorious,
He on his throne shall rest,
From age to age more glorious,
All blessing and all blest.
The tide of time shall never,
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand forever,—
His name — what is it? — Love."[1]

The same great purpose of God appears in the earliest Divine communication subsequent to the sin of our first parents. Though in the form of a denunciation upon the serpent, it is a promise of redemption to man. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."[2] When the first pair sinned, they were in love with the serpent; that is, with evil; for it comes to this, whether we consider the serpent an embodiment of evil, or only a personification of it. But enmity to evil

[1]Montgomery. [2]Gen. iii. 15.

is a love of good. The promise, therefore, to put enmity between the woman and her seed, or all mankind, on the one hand, and the serpent and his seed, or all evil, on the other, is equivalent to the promise that all shall come to love good, and therefore to the condition of salvation. Upon the serpent, the results of this enmity will be fatal. The seed of the woman shall bruise his head, — inflict a mortal injury; while the hurt of sin shall be temporary, as is indicated by the serpent merely bruising the heel of man.

Thus, whatever of figure there may be in the various forms of presenting the mission of Christ, they all have points of coincidence; and the idea in which they all meet together, becomes the key to unlock the signification of each. When the serpent and his seed are destroyed, and the world reconciled to God, then will the love of the world be given to Christ, who will have fully entered upon his inheritance. Thus shall the Divine appointment of Christ as "heir of all things," be fully verified.

It may be objected to the general form of this argument, that God, speaking by the prophet

Ezekiel, says, "All souls are mine;"[1] and yet all men do not love God. Hence it may be inferred that to possess a human soul, is not necessarily to possess its affections.

I reply, however, that power to gain the affections, does seem to be necessarily involved in the possession of a soul, in any sense. It is not enough that God created a soul, and has thus far preserved it, to establish the fact of present possession of it. If it has an agency which places it, at present, beyond the reach of Omnipotence, and is at the same time, totally alienated in spirit, I see not in what possible sense God can be said to possess such a soul. If he could say, on the ground of absolute moral claim, such a soul is mine, still it would be a lost treasure,—so lost that Deity could neither count it, in any sense among his possessions, nor bestow it as an inheritance upon his Son. But if, besides his moral claim upon such a soul, he still retains control over it, — such a control as enables him to subject it to law, whether the law of retribution, or the law of love — for the one must be as completely within the Divine preroga-

[1] Ezek. xviii. 4.

tive as the other; indeed, the law of love, in part, is the law of retribution — I say, if Deity still retains such control over a soul as enables him to subject it to the law of love, though his purpose to do this is not yet executed, there is a high sense in which he can say, such a soul is mine; and that sense quite harmonious with the principle we have laid down. That such control is among the divine prerogatives, is more than intimated by Solomon, when he says, "The King's heart," not the heart of the lowly alone, but "the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, he turneth it whithersoever he will."[1] The Divine requirement that men should love God with all the soul, and the energies of Divine Providence working towards the fulfillment of this requirement, are a sufficient indication that such a result is involved in the Divine purpose. And, let it be observed, that the appointment of Christ as "heir of all things," is simply an expression of that purpose, by the taking of a decisive step towards the execution of it. Thus, it is the divine claim upon the love of all souls, and the absolute control of

[1] Prov. xxi. 1.

God over them, which constitute the basis of Christ's appointment as "heir of all things." Without such a basis, the appointment could not have the slightest validity or force. Any man who hears me, might as well bequeath to his son a herd of wild horses upon the distant prairie, or a plantation on the latest discovered planet.

There is another consideration of consequence in this connexion. Christ was appointed to an inheritance he did not already possess. It involves the accomplishment of a work — the great work, undoubtedly, for which he came into the world. And when he shall have taken possession of that inheritance, the world of mankind will be placed in moral relations to him which it did not before occupy. Possessing such a claim upon men, and control over them, as warrants the Divine declaration, "All souls are mine," what can the appointment of Christ as "heir of the world," signify, if it does not indicate the purpose that he shall win unto himself the alienated heart of the world, and thus take actual possession of all souls, for the glory of God and the blessedness of man?

There is still further weight in the text itself, in support of this opinion. The phrase, "heir of all things," implies homogeneity of condition among these "all things," when Christ shall have taken possession of them. Whatever will be the condition of one soul, when it shall have become Christ's, will be the condition of all souls, of whom he is alike the heir. Now that Christ's inheritance, when entered upon, will be a pure and spotless one, there is no room to doubt. This, indeed, is the thought of all Christians, that all those really given to Christ, will be blest in the perfectness of their love, and will become Christ's by becoming perfect in love. Since, then, by universal concession, the text involves the giving of the purified affections of some souls unto Christ, I submit that it is equally conclusive in regard to all souls.

When it is said, as by Paul, that all things shall be subjected unto Christ, it is alleged that this subjection will not be uniform in kind. Some will yield a voluntary and affectionate submission, and others a forced and condemnatory one. I cannot allow this objection to be valid against the argument for universal reconciliation which

such Scriptures furnish. The very terms of those passages overthrow the construction attempted to be put upon them. For example; Paul says to the Philippians, speaking of Christ having humbled himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," — here is universality, — "and that every tongue should confess" — this word implies voluntariness — "that Jesus Christ is Lord," — spiritual ruler — "to the *glory* of God the Father."[1] And Christ says, "Herein is my Father *glorified*, that ye bear much fruit."[2] In writing to the Corinthians, also, the apostle mentions, as the result of this universal subjection, that God shall be "all in all." So that the allegation of different kinds of subjection, is excluded by the very terms of these passages themselves. But against the text, — its universality, and the perfect love to Christ it implies, — not even the form of an objection can be made to lie. Its

[1] Phil. ii. 9–11. [2] John xv. 8.

whole force, as I have said, is an implication of homogeneity of moral condition throughout the inheritance to which Christ is appointed.

Such is the heirship of Christ; such the inheritance given him of God; and such will be the blessedness of that inheritance when he shall have taken possession of it.

Let us now observe that God hath "appointed Christ to this inheritance." He has not simply given him leave to become "heir of all things," if he shall be able, or if the inheritance itself should be pleased with the transfer; but God has "*appointed* Christ heir of all things." Though the execution of the purpose will involve human activities, yet, so far as establishing the fact is concerned, the transaction involved two parties only, the legator and the legatee.

Christ, too, was appointed to this inheritance in full view of all the difficulties in taking possession of it. Many Christians are impressed with the Divine purposes, and with the breadth and fulness of the possible possessions of Christ; but there are to their minds insuperable difficulties in the accomplishment of all this good. The sin of the world keeps it away from Christ, and threat-

ens to despoil him of his inheritance. They forget that the sin of the world was the sole occasion of Christ's appointment to be its heir; that the very purpose of this appointment was the recovery of the world from sin, by the winning of its affections unto God. To suppose that sin is an insuperable obstacle to the accomplishment of this purpose, is to deny the validity of the appointment itself. It is to allege it defective, either in the style of the appointment, or in the neglect to clothe Christ with sufficient powers to enable him to take possession of the inheritance. In either case, the Divine transaction is void; and God ceases to be God. If our hearts, as well as our understandings, rebel against such abuses of reason, let us accept the appointment made in the text, as a sovereign appointment; and believe that Christ is clothed with all power requisite to its entire realization. We have already intimated that Christ is qualified to become "the heir of the world," by the spiritual power that is in him; that this power is the instrumentality by which he shall take possession of his inheritance. Let me now remark, that this is the only power competent to such a work; that the "righteous-

ness of faith," the spiritual graces manifest in his life, the perpetual yearning of his heart for the good of man, are the only means by which the world can be won to the same purity and blessedness, and made the inheritance of Christ. He is, therefore, in a more literal sense than the common interpretation allows, "the way, the truth, and the life." [1]

I am quite aware that the sovereignty of the Divine appointment, which we have thus affirmed, and which appears to us to be everywhere inscribed on the sacred page, has been pointedly denied, — denied by involving it in a much broader denial. This denial extends to the entire moral domain of God. His sovereignty in the physical world is not only allowed, but insisted on; while, in the spiritual world, it is supposed to be restricted, if not entirely annulled. A somewhat distinguished English divine, has the honor of having suggested this distinction; and it has been imported to our own country, as affording a happy deliverance from the difficulties imposed upon the frigid creeds of our time, by the growing perception of the fulness of Divine love.

[1] John xiv. 6.

An elaborate refutation of such a position cannot be demanded in this place. When we distinctly consider that God is an omnipresent spirit, we shall find it quite impossible to conceive of his exclusion from his spiritual domain; much less shall we be able to believe it. If it is absurd to say of a given individual, that he is a learned astronomer, while he is uninformed of the most common truths of even our own solar system; or of another, that he is a skillful mathematician, while ignorant of the first principles of numbers; or of a third, that he is an able tragedian, while he is incompetent to play the humblest part in a tragedy; or of yet a fourth, that he is the prince of orators, while he is wholly destitute of eloquence; it can be no less absurd, surely, to say that a spiritual being is omnipotent, who yet cannot rule in his spiritual domain. This is his home department, as it were, — the department, in which, more especially, he is omnipotent. If he has not power here, he can have it nowhere; since it is in the spiritual that all power begins.

I repeat, it is precisely here that he is sovereign. Not sovereign in ruling men *contrary to*

their own will, but in making them willing to submit to his rule. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." If it is within the scope of the Divine prerogatives to bring a single soul to an adoration of his own resplendent attributes, without infringement of its freedom and responsibility, — and this is conceded on every hand, — there can be no difficulty in the principle involved; since the mere repetition of this work of redemption, until the "all things" mentioned in the text shall be included, confers upon Christ his inheritance, and redeems the world unto God.

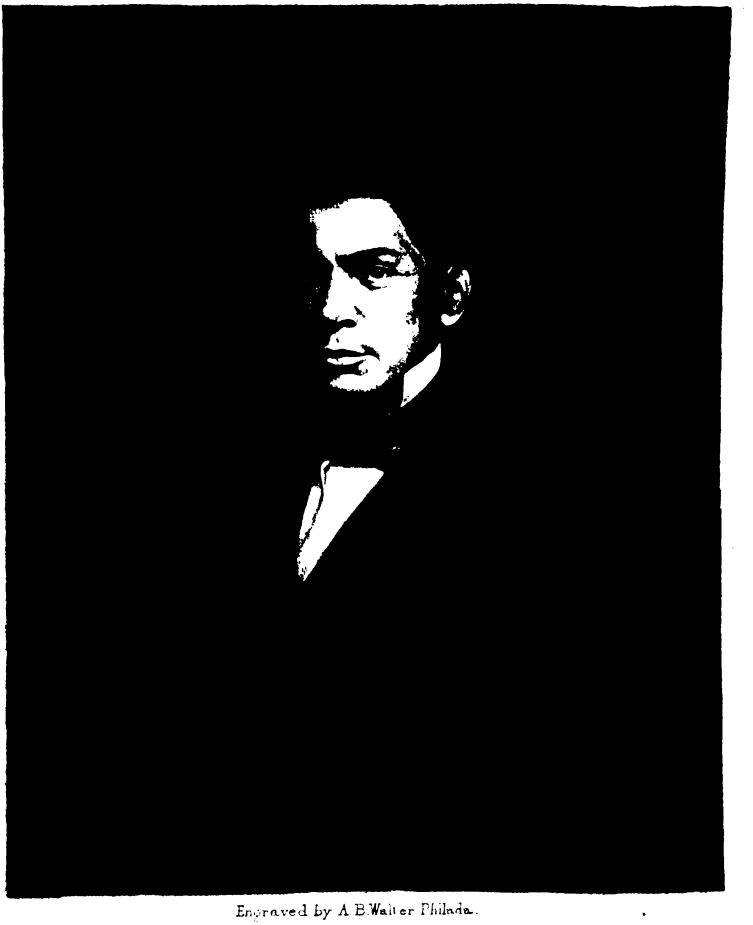
This is the intent of the sovereign purpose of God. It is the significance of the providence appointing Christ "heir of all things," — a providence which is the end of all other providences, — to the accomplishment of which all other providences conspire. It was the consummation seen by angels, and prompting the exclamation, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."[1] It was the foundation of that earlier joy, when the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."[2]

[1] Luke ii. 14. [2] Job xxxviii. 7.

It becomes the foundation of our hopes, since it involves the destiny of the world. In conferring upon Christ the distinguished honor of inheriting all souls, there is conferred upon man the honor of being Christ's, and of sharing with him all the blessedness of his kingdom. He enters upon the same communion with the Father, and shares it joyfully with a redeemed universe. To the clear eye of faith, the unclouded glories of God are manifest; and the soul inherits the bliss of that upper world. We thus become "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."[1]

It remains for us to live worthy the high destiny to which God has appointed us. And if we would enter upon our inheritance and the blessedness of the heavenly kingdom, we must believe that "wisdom is better than rubies," and that the love of God is the life of the soul.

[1]Rom. viii. 17.



Engraved by A B Walter Philada.

W. H. Ryder.

SERMON IV.

UNIVERSALISM NOT A DOGMA BUT A SYSTEM.

BY REV. W. H. RYDER.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."—Eph. ii. 20: 21.

THE Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, was the basis of Luther's opposition to the Roman Church. He also protested against the efficiency of indulgences, exposed the folly of many superstitions, and ridiculed mass for the dead, but this was the essential idea of his reform.

In assuming the position, however, that "the Holy Scriptures are the only source whence we are to draw our religious sentiments, whether they relate to faith or practice," he opened the way for the introduction of new elements of opposition, and new forms of belief. Accordingly,

we find the Augsburg Confession of Faith, "written by the elegant and accurate pen of Melancthon," opposed by the Reformer of Geneva, who claimed to have higher grounds of opposition to the Roman Church, and to have discovered doctrines not acknowledged by the Reformer of Wittenberg. Luther made the immorality of the Church the subject of severe censure; Calvin protested against its idolatry, and demanded a spiritual worship independent of all images, tapers and pictures.

Zwingle exposed Luther's error in adhering to the Papists doctrine of Consubstantiation, and Arminius attacked Calvin for his rigid opinions upon free will, predestination and grace.

The pietistic views of the celebrated mystic of Oxford, found able advocates in Wesley and Whitefield, — the former sustaining the position of Arminius, the latter that of Calvin. And thus one doctrine after another was evolved from controversy; new sects were founded, as old opinions were rejected and new views avowed, until every important doctrine of Romanism has been directly opposed, and, it would seem, every doctrine of the Gospel had a special organization for its defence.

A review of the Christian Church through all these changes, leaves no room for suspicion in relation to the sincerity of those who have professed these various opinions. Nor is there, probably, any real doubt, but that the leading tenet of each one of these sects, is, to some extent, true. Occasionally a folly is started, and carried forward in the midst of an intelligent community, the claims of which, upon sober sense, it would be difficult to discern; but such instances are *only occasional;* neither are they of long duration. Most sects, parties and organizations, do really involve some valuable principle. The folly of Millerism was not all folly; it only gave the dates to an opinion in reference to the second coming of Christ, which was and is entertained by nearly every Protestant sect! If the Lord were to come soon, why not then, as the figures showed? And thus, in every theory of medicine, in every party in politics, in every reform scheme, and in nearly every thing that sensible and good men really interest themselves in, there is to be found some worthy element; it has its claim or its apology; it is a good thought which deserves encouragement, or a worthy mo-

tive misapplied, or a gem of truth in a setting of falsehood.

The correctness of our position in reference to Protestantism will perhaps appear, if we direct attention to the leading tenets of its most prominent sects.

Methodism turns upon the doctrine of the new-birth. Now there is no doubt but that the Bible teaches the necessity of being "born again," for that is expressly declared. The only question is in reference to the signification of the phrase, and the rank which it should hold in our systems of belief. We think that the followers of Wesley misinterpret the conversation between our Lord and Nicodemus; that they mistake the figure for the thought it embodies, and that they give to this tenet a more prominent place than was assigned to it by the apostles and immediate followers of Christ.

Calvinism talks of the irrevocable decrees of God; and in this it rests upon a firm basis. There is no doubt but that the decrees of God are unalterable; the Bible, nature and reason alike prove this. But the fact of the decree by no means determines the thing decreed. If

we concede the premise of the fall of Adam, with certain specifications attached, we cannot avoid the consequences which are said to have resulted from that fall; for Calvinism in the creed, deals with cause and effect—with the precision of mathematics. It appears to us, however, that the premise is radically false; so that while we rejoice in every statement which is designed to set forth the Sovereignty of God, and the majesty of His presence, we reject any proposition which involves His partiality.

The Baptists insist upon the rite of baptism, as a requisite to the privileges of a church relation. We readily concede the utility of this rite to all those who are personally impressed with its importance. The Saviour was baptized, and from his disciples many believers received baptism; but this ceremony had long been practiced by the Jews, and it is more than probable that the rite signified to the Christian what it indicated among them, i. e., admission to a purer religious faith. And even could it be made to appear that the observance of this rite was required as a duty then, it does not logically follow that the observance of it is imperative

now. That would not be alleged of certain ceremonies very generally practiced among the early Christians. Baptism is, however, a Christian rite, — beautifully emblematic, against which there rests no valid objection, and may be administered to any believer who recognizes its importance.

These references are sufficient for our purpose; but if we extended our inquiries to sects less prominent, we should probably find that the leading tenet in each, was to a greater or less extent true. The champions of these several parties believed that they had discovered truth, and though we may be forced to the conclusion that they have misinterpreted or misapplied the various doctrines which they professed to derive from the Scriptures, it is not usually difficult to discover traces of royal lineage in their respective opinions.

Should we not, then, expect that the true system of Religious Belief, by whatever name it be known, will recognize and include all these various opinions, scripturally explained, each occupying its proper position? The temple of truth is composed of many materials, which, fitly framed

together, and resting upon the true foundation, produce a perfect unity in the Lord.

But all these Protestant denominations rest upon a common basis. They are related by a family bond. They have essentially the same foundation, and if that is unsound or false in one sect of this class, it is of necessity in every sect. Lutheranism was wrong in some of its fundamental principles. In the beginning it was merely a fresh scion, of a somewhat uncertain nature, grafted into the old papal tree. Its foliage was pleasant and the fruit delicious to the starving peasantry of Germany, but it was the sap of Popery that gave strength to the limb. Calvin took a bud from Luther's scion and set it in a thornbush. It grew well, but it had a weak foundation; it has become a sturdy tree, but it is not that tree which scattereth its "leaves for the healing of the nations," for it has not the vitalizing principle of the Divine nature in it.

All Protestant sects may be reduced to two classes. They may be distinguished, (first,) as those who believe that God is unreconciled to his children in consequence of the transgression of Adam, and those who contend that he is not un-

reconciled to them, — that man is unreconciled to God, not God to man. Or, (second,) those who teach that God will endlessly chastise those who violate his laws here, and those who maintain that the Divine Government is administered with primary reference to the good of his children; — that he will not introduce an endless evil as a return for temporal offences.

The doctrine of original sin, and the necessity of some peculiar spiritual change to obtain the favor of God, is the one idea which runs through all Protestant sects that are based upon the position that God is unreconciled to the world, — or its kindred basis of returning evil for evil. Particular points of doctrine are made prominent by different denominations, occupying various standpoints, but they are only so many varieties of the the same species.

Universalism takes up the opposite side of this controversy. It is not a new variety of a given species; it is itself a distinct species. It is not a doctrine, which may be classed with one of the tenets already named; it is itself a system. It asserts that other sects are *fundamentally* false. First of all, as we have seen, it flatly denies that

God is unreconciled to his children, or ever can be. It claims that in this regard thec haracter of God has been greatly misrepresented by all Calvanistic and Arminian sects. Christ died to reconcile the world to God not God to the world, is its position.

Secondly, it stoutly protests against the doctrine of original sin, and the equally objectionable dogma of imputed rightousness. Adam sinned, and his transgression may fully illustrate the sinfulness of human nature, but his disobedience has not exposed us to all the "sorrows of this life and the pains of hell forever." The doctrine that the whole moral and physical world was radically changed by the disobedience of our first parents, that

> "About them frisking played
> All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
> In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
> Sporting, the lion ramped, and in his paw
> Dandled the kid;"

is affirmed to be the mere conception of Milton's imagination; while the fossil remains of animals known to have existed thousands of years before Adam was created, demonstrate the position that

the disobedience of our first parents did not introduce death into our world.

The distinction between motives to obedience, is equally fundamental. Universalism presents love in opposition to the prevalent idea of fear. It would magnify God's mercy, rather than his offended justice. It pleads, that it is the goodness of God that leadeth men to repentance and newness of life, that the *vital principle of the Gospel is love to God and men;* and that the Saviour, as the representative of the Father, most clearly taught us, that we are not to return evil for evil, but to overcome evil with good.

Universalism may have to some minds a signification which is, in effect, the antithesis of the tenet of endless misery, but that is not its true definition. Its actual position is that of a new system; not a new idea upon the old basis, or a new dogma standing against an old dogma, but a new platform, which gives character to every doctrine resting upon it. The distinction between it and other sects is not local or relative; but general and absolute.

There is a tendency in every denomination to give peculiar prominence to its distinctive idea.

The sects known as Baptists, present perhaps, of all the Protestant sects, the most forcible illustration of this. Baptism is not only made a prerequisite of church-fellowship, but the very form in which it should be administered is insisted upon. Sprinkling is of no service, though the water used were fresh from the Jordan itself: immersion is the one thing needful, even if it be peformed in a mere box.

Besides, churches are divided upon the point of admitting to the Lord's table those who have not been baptized by immersion. Free-Will Baptists maintain the doctrine of an open communion, but the Calvanistic Baptists deny the fitness of any person for the reception of this ser vice, who has not received baptism in the form of immersion. And finally, upon the question whether it be proper to baptize children, we have the Pedo-Baptists, and the Antipedo-Baptists, each tenacious of his opinion and anxious to press it to the extreme of its application.

"Luther," says Mosheim, "carried the doctrine of justification by faith to such a length as probably contrary to his intention, derogated not only from the necessity of good works, but even from

their obligations and importance." Idolatry was probably introduced in the same general form. Material things were used as aids to spiritual worship. These were multiplied and became more sacred; until, finally, the material element preponderated to such a degree that the visible aid to worship became itself the object of worship. Again. The heathens generally believed that there was but one supreme God; they however gave different names to the various relations which he sustained to the world. In connection with lightning or thunder they called him Jupiter; with the sea, Neptune; their councils Minerva; their battles, Mars. After a while they used various representations of this one person, corresponding to these several relations; from this came the vulgar error of many different persons. Not satisfied with this, they had a Jupiter for separate portions of the world and for particular nations, and it appears upon good authority that in Italy almost every town and hamlet had a Jupiter of its own. Finally, the antiquities of heathen nations furnish us with a still greater excess, — that of combining portions of different beings, as the human head with the

body of a lion, bull or some one of the more powerful animals; or one body with several heads. And it is from this compound of material conceptions, I have no doubt, that the Trinity was derived; for the triformous Jupiter of the heathens is essentially the triune God of the Christians.

This tendency to intensify the claims of a favorite opinion, shows how easy it is for sincere Christians to overstate a good idea, and, by thrusting it forward to the exclusion of every other thought, it may stand in the popular mind in false relations. Take, for instance, the Wesleyan doctrine of free grace:

> "While the lamp holds out to burn,
> The vilest sinner may return."

So far as this doctrine sets forth the forgiving mercy of God, we rejoice in it; but too prominent a presentation of this tenet will furnish the sinner with the apology that he can repent at any time. And is it not possible for even so good a doctrine as that of Universal Salvation to be so prominently urged, especially by way of opposition to the tenets of other sects, and in

connection with the extreme view of God's Sovereignty, as to lead the sinner to suppose that there is no need of repenting at all? Of course, he would not so reason if he occupied our position; but

"What can he reason but from what he knows?"

And when we hear professed Christians talk, as we sometimes do, about having the *Gospel* preached, — they wish none of your new-fangled notions, such as anti-slavery, temperance, and peace, but the plain, old-fashioned Gospel, — we are forced to the conclusion, that a vast deal of labor is yet to be performed, before some of those who are nominally Universalists, will comprehend what Universalism means.

The doctrine of the final salvation of the world is important even as a single tenet; and if it stood alone, it would afford abundant material for the creation of a new sect. The question involved is of vital interest to every soul, and ought never to be kept back, or equivocally presented. Duplicity, in any calling, is by no means commendable. We believe in distinctive preaching. We would have the doctrine of the

final salvation of the world clearly presented, but we would not have it so repeatedly and prominently urged, as to stand in the popular mind for the whole of Universalism. No mere dogma, as such, can possibly contain it. In the universal application of its principles, and the spirituality of its means, Christianity is adapted to all people in every age and condition. If Universalism comprehend its essential elements, it is more than a sect or party. It is the true Catholic faith. It is impossible for that to be a mere dogma, which is strictly Universal-ism.

We cheerfully concede the necessity which has prompted the continued utterance of this particular doctrine of a world's salvation. For those who have gone before us, we entertain too profound a respect to question the propriety of their labors, without the clearest provocation. And if in our heart we felt the slightest desire even to hint at unfaithfulness to the exigences of their age, the memory of that brave patriarch whom we miss from our Annual Convention, would effectually prevent its utterance. Besides, we love the contemplation of a world redeemed from sin; our heart rejoices at the

thought of being permitted to exercise full faith in this scriptural assurance, and to be a messenger of God for its proclamation; still, we are firmly persuaded, that this idea alone does not constitute the Gospel of Christ. That is true; but there are other doctrines true, also. Universalism includes every doctrine of the New Testament. Each has its appropriate place, and is more or less important. We make no doubt, but that the doctrine of the final salvation of the world, is the key-stone of the arch of truth, but the key-stone, however important it may be, is not the whole arch; neither is this, nor any other tenet, however essential, the whole Gospel of Christ.

The form in which the Saviour presented his doctrines to the world, affords a pertinent illustration in aid of our subject. We do not concede, what some claim, that the final salvation of the world is not taught in any specific text in the Gospels: we think our Lord taught it in his reply to the question of the Sadducees, touching the resurrection of the dead, not to mention other instances, but we are far from affirming that we find in these controverted and isolated

texts, the most satisfactory evidence of the divine nature and purposes. We refer to the very fact of a revelation, to the spirit which pervades it, to the character which it ascribes to God, and to the Life and Precepts of Christ, as affording the most convincing and complete evidence.

If we take the position, that the favor of God was not forfeited by the disobedience of Adam, that he was not our covenant head, but that God is the Father and Friend of all, — that He is love, and cannot hate; we necessarily give a peculiar interpretation to all the subordinate traits of the Gospel. As the leading thought of a parable gives tone to the entire figure, so does the principle of the Divine Fatherhood affect every doctrine and institution of the New Testament. It would be difficult, however, to present the thought of the parable without an appropriate medium; equally difficult would it be to bring out the Gospel of Christ, without a distinct recognition of its several doctrines, and the practical application of its institutions.

The doctrine of repentance holds an important place in the New Testament. All the communications which God has made to the world, either

through Moses, the Prophets, or His Son, have been designed to lead men to repentance. The preaching of John, in preparing the way for the coming of the Lord, was especially direct and forcible. Even the hypocritical Pharisee began to inquire of his duty. The publican, enriched by the unlawful use of his power, and the soldier, indolent and complaining, were also moved by the persuasive eloquence of his appeals, to inquire what he would have them do. The language of Jesus to the Jews, when about to receive death at their hands, implies that they had abused a freedom which they might have exercised to their profit, and fully deserved the fearful destruction which was soon to overtake them, as the reward of their wickedness.

The displeasure of God at the sinfulness of men, is a clear doctrine of the Scriptures. Even the angels are represented as exercising an interest in the repentance of the wicked. It is easy to explain these references to the wrath or anger of God, as not meaning certain things, but what do they mean? is the question. They obviously imply displeasure at sin, — a displeasure that is repeatedly presented — often in bold, metaphor-

ical language, difficult of interpretation, but always setting forth His abhorrence of evil.

These, and other doctrines of the Gospel, are indispensable to the full proclamation and efficient application of Universalism. It cannot be suitably addressed to the affections of men without these aids. They are its natural members. If it be deprived of any one of them, it is so far weakened. "They are all members one of another."

Besides, upon this basis, these subordinate doctrines may be more efficiently urged than upon any other. No exhortation to repentance can be more effective, than that which is based upon the continued goodness of God; and no view of punishment will better illustrate the fearfulness of sin, than that which maintains the strictest personal responsibility, and the absolute certainty that every transgression will receive its just recompense of reward. Universalism recognizes Love as the highest principle in the moral universe: — God is love! Love is the most exalted state of the soul, — it must, therefore, be the ultimate of all culture.

For the preaching of the Gospel of Christ upon this basis of belief, the world impatiently waits

Old forms of faith are becoming comparatively powerless in the light of a broader philanthropy. Calvinism, resting upon the very worst analysis of human nature, may have sufficed for that early age of Protestantism, but Calvinism, in all its multiplied forms, cannot contain the Gospel of Christ, and must be rejected by the generous thought and feeling of a more advanced period. Humanity demands a Faith, broader in its sympathies than the world's best hope; a Faith that does not make Religion the synonym of Piety, but recognizes and enforces the two-fold duty of loving God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves.

We believe that Universalism embodies the essential elements of the Gospel of Christ: we are confident, therefore, that its distinct proclamation will become an efficient aid in the reformation of the world. Besides, we are more than ever impressed with the necessity which exists for the introduction of a pure spiritual element into all the relations of society. There is no want of generous feeling, no immediate need of churches, or institutions of charity, but there is pressing need of a higher spiritual standard, to give tone and direction to thought and life. The

pulpits of Christendom are not morally in earnest. Their chief labor is to satisfy the demands of the divine justice.

Piety is a mere "insurance against the fire of the wrath of" God; and Duty is not altogether clear, until one has read the last platform of his political party. Universalism aims to furnish this spiritual standard. Discouraging all forms not directly conducive to the growth of the spirit, it humbly endeavors to restore the church to its simplicity and power. To this end, it goes back to an earlier date than the reformation of Luther, or any mere Reformer. The Bible is its rock of defence. The teaching of Jesus and his disciples is its creed. It would infuse the spirit of the Gospel into the hearts and lives of men. It has a higher purpose than merely to enlarge the borders of a sect; it seeks to inspire a profound reverence for God, and a sincere love for man. Resting upon the principle of overcoming evil with good, as one of its cardinal precepts, Universalism lends a ready encouragement to the most hopeful institutions of our age, rejoices in view of the increased liberality of opposing sects, and the growing philanthropy of the world, and

looks with favor upon every measure, by whomsoever advocated, that promises to promote the general good.

Let us all, then, give diligent heed to the obligations of this more glorious faith, and while we are earnest in our defence of its several doctrines, we shall best attest our fidelity to the Gospel of Christ, by giving to each its appropriate place upon "the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord."

Engraved by A.B. Walter Philada

H. Ballou 2d

SERMON V.

REPROACH OF UNIVERSALISM.

BY REV. HOSEA BALLOU, 2D.

"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe."—1 TIM. iv. 10.

IF we were to compare the Apostle's doctrine, in this passage, with the views that are commonly entertained in the religious world of the present day, we should find one point, here, in which all agree. And it may be well to set out from this point as our starting-place.

All agree that God is the Saviour "of those that believe." This is everywhere maintained, and everywhere repeated, in pulpits, in conference-rooms, and in private exhortations. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." In short, there never was any question

that God is truly the Saviour of all believers. And here, people commonly stop.

It should be observed, however, that our text does not stop here. Our text asserts that God is indeed the Saviour of believers, in some special sense. But this is not all; it goes further. It asserts, also, that he "is the Saviour of all men." And you will observe that this is introduced, here, as the main proposition of the two, — that it takes precedence of the other, and that what relates to believers grows out of this, as a branch from the main trunk. Lest we might still suppose that the Apostle did not really intend to assert the salvation of all, but that he somehow meant to refer only to that of the saints, you see, from the very form of his expression, that he recognises the distinction of mankind into the two well-known classes: first, the race at large, — "all men;" and then, as a special class out of these, the believers; and that he affirms that God is the Saviour of the former as well as of the latter, of the whole mass as well as of those who already believe. I cannot conceive of any thing more explicit, or more guarded against the chance of misapprehension.

If we now inquire, what it is that makes the speciality here mentioned, in the case of believers, the answer will readily occur to you. It is this, — that to believers God has already given the first-fruits of their salvation, as he has not yet done to the rest. In some degree, they have already come into "the joy set before them;" they have a foretaste of the inheritance that awaits them. As it is said in another place, "Believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." This is what makes their case a special one, different from that of the common mass.

But, then, we must not forget, my friends, that even these believers, who are now distinguished with this speciality, were once unbelievers themselves. They once belonged to the common mass, and were taken out of it, and converted, only because "God would have all men to be saved," and because he instituted the dispensation of the Gospel for this purpose. These believers had been brought into the faith at that early stage of the grand enterprise. But if God had not purposed the salvation of the whole world, there would have been no Gospel given,

and of course there would have been no believers. As St. Paul says again, "God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." That was the ultimate object with regard to the whole race. The same Divine Power, who has already brought multitudes to believe, and "saved them by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost," is continually carrying on the work with those who belong, as yet, to the class of unbelievers. He is daily bringing them over, one by one, or in greater numbers. They are as the raw material out of which God makes all his saints, —pardon the homeliness of the expression, for its truth! For you know there never was a believer, but was taken out of the mass of unbelievers. Unconverted sinners are like ore in the mine, — loathsome, perhaps, with filth, and unfit for use in their present condition; but there is One "who sits as a Refiner and Purifier of silver," and knows the value of the crude mass, as the Metallurgist knows the value of those unsmelted heaps of seeming rubbish, which the simple, in their ignorance, would be for throwing away. God will not throw away a single soul

from among the sinners. He knows a better use to which they may be put; he can make saints of them. And it should be remembered that this is the very purpose for which he instituted the whole economy of the gospel. Well did St. Paul say, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." They were precious in his sight; not so much for what they now are, as for what they may be made. We know that he is, every day, adding new subjects to his kingdom from among them; and the great enterprise of redemption can never rest in its victorious progress, until all are brought in.

We see, then, the propriety of the central proposition in our text, that "the living God is the Saviour of all men." We see why it is placed foremost, here, as the universal truth, on which the special corollary, which follows, depends. We see, likewise, that there is a speciality in the case of believers. In some measure, they have already received the salvation, which is in process for the whole race.

It was not our design, however, to dwell on this doctrine, which lies at the centre of our text,

nor to illustrate its truth, by other passages. It is a different train of thought which we propose now to enter upon.

If you look into the text, I think you will see that the object of St. Paul, here, was, not to expatiate on this, or on any other point of doctrine, but to speak of the hardships which he and his brethren underwent for maintaining this truth before the world. Their doctrine of "God, the Saviour of all men," was a matter of reproach, in those times: "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." For this trust, for this faith, and for their open maintenance of it, they had to encounter the popular odium. It was offensive to the feelings and prejudices of the world, at that day. And you know, my brethren, that it continues to be the case, in some measure, down to our day. Notwithstanding the exceptions that we now find in many places, — and some noble exceptions there are, — it would still be appropriate to repeat this very language with reference to ourselves, and to say, "*We* both labor and suffer reproach" on the same account. The

gospel has not changed in this respect, and the world has not changed in its antipathy to it, for the past two thousand years. A long period! And now we wish to inquire, from what cause, or causes, does this inveterate reproach arise? Why is it that the world in general continues, from age to age, to dislike the truth, that "God is the Saviour of all men," and to revile it?

Before we proceed, however, to answer the question, we must give a few moments to a very singular notion, that stands here directly in our way, and that we cannot well get by. It is the common saying, that this doctrine is pleasing to the carnal heart, — that it is just what suits the sinful passions and corrupt tastes of the unregenerate world. But I would ask, How does this allegation agree with the well-known facts we have mentioned, of the inveterate, long-continued reproach cast upon the doctrine? The world *loves* the doctrine of Universal Salvation! It has had a strange way of showing its love to it, now for two thousand years. I confess, I do not understand how it is, that intelligent people put on a face to repeat that saying. There the facts are before their eyes; they see that the world,—

even the unregenerate part of the world, taking it together, — is opposed to no other doctrine so much as it is to this. And now, how shall we account for the repugnance? Somehow, and from some cause, there is an instinctive hostility to it, among the mass of the unsanctified. No, my friends; they do not gather to it in swarms. like bees to honey, as they would do, if it really gratified their corrupt tastes. They do not like it; they stand aloof from it; they speak evil of it. These are the notorious facts. And I think we shall discover the primary reason to be, that its very nature conflicts with certain wicked propensities in their hearts; it partakes too much of the spirit of God to suit their tastes.

Of all the short-sighted mistakes that people fall into, there never was a blinder one, than in the cant saying, that "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men," is pleasing to the carnal heart. My friends, it is pleasing to God. St. Paul says, that to have all men saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth, "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour." And if it is acceptable in his sight, it cannot be so to the carnal heart. On the contrary, it is the

only doctrine that any good man upon earth wishes to be true. Its spirit, of universal love, is the only spirit in which any good man seeks to live, or by which he strives to govern his practice. He may reject the theory, but its moral principles are at work in his soul, like leaven, and prompt all his higher emotions, of hopes full of kindling and enlarging glory, and of benevolence, flowing out unconfined over the whole world. We said, it is pleasing to God; and we may add, that, in spite of all prejudice, it is the earnest desire of every soul in which his spirit dwells. Wherever the divine spirit goes, it carries with it its own aims and purposes. As a matter of fact, the salvation of all men is what Christians of every name and creed have prayed for, ever since the gospel was first preached upon earth. They are praying for it to-day, and their petitions are everywhere going up before the throne of God, like a great cloud of incense, from the face of all the earth. Why, then, do they oppose it, and cast reproach upon it?

In answering this question, it may be well for us to begin, by looking back to the apostolic age, and by observing why this gospel was sub-

jected to so much reproach, at that time. "Because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." says the Apostle, "therefore, we both labor and suffer reproach," — from whom? — from what class of men? Now, you are aware of the quarter from which most of the contempt and abuse came, in his case. When he was among the Jews, it was from the priests, scribes, Sadducees, and Pharisees, — the foremost patrons of that kind of religion which had for ages occupied every town, village, and city, in that country. When he was among the Gentiles, the opposition came from the same people scattered there, and also from the zealots and devotees of the heathen systems of religion. It is a very significant circumstance, which ought to be more generally attended to, that the common people, especially those who were then called "the sinners," heard Christ and his apostles "gladly," and were by far the most disposed to receive the truth. And on this account it was said, then as now, that his doctrine was pleasing to the ungodly. Speaking of those who favored him, they said, "This people, which knoweth not the law,

are cursed. But have any of the Pharisees, or of the rulers, believed on him?" The whole body of religious leaders, (speaking in general terms,) the whole body of those who were regarded as the righteous, stood up in hostility to the gospel, warned the community against it, pronounced it an awful delusion and blasphemy, cast its believers out of the synagogues, and did every thing to rouse the popular prejudice.

We are not disposed to liken the older sects in our time and country, to the ancient Pharisees; for that would be, in many respects, unjust. But I think that, when you consider how the case was in the age of the apostles, you will see that it is not strange in the least, that a strong tide of reproach against the doctrine of "God the Saviour of all men," should be found to come, in our day, from a religious quarter, as it did then. Pharisaism, alas! did not wholly die out with the old Jews. It has found a way into the Christian church, as it has into almost every human institution. For Pharisaism is not confined to this or that sect, nor to any one age; it is a common element of the human character; it may be found wherever man is found. And all

the Pharisaism there is in the older forms of religion around us, will operate now, just as it did of old, — will oppose, and despise, and hate, the idea of impartial grace and universal salvation. Wherever there is a taint of Pharisaism, even though it be in the heart of an otherwise good man, it will show itself on this point; it cannot bear that all mankind should be brought to the equal mercy of our common Father. And so long as such a spirit continues in our world, there must be this reproach.

There is another consideration that belongs here. Keeping still in view the quarter whence the greater part of this hostility arises, we can see a natural cause for it, in the grounds upon which the gospel of "God the Saviour of all men," places religion, — experimental and practical religion, — grounds of a very different nature from those on which every other form of the gospel must place it. The doctrine of universal grace and salvation makes the cause of religion among men to rest wholly on the love of God. It cannot say to the sinner, "There is eternal torment for you, if you do not repent and make God your friend," nor, on the other hand,

"There is eternal glory for you, only on condition that you secure it now." It cannot drive people to the service of God at the point of the bayonet, as it were, by the fear of endless punishment; it cannot make a mere traffic of their affections, and hire them to love God by the offer of heaven as wages. Bought love, my friends, is cheap stuff, or rather, it is dear at the lowest price. The gospel must speak in the language of free grace, and not of barter. Its voice must be always tuned to accordance with that annunciation in which it first broke upon the world at the birth of Christ, when the angel of the Lord descended, and said, "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." *That* is its key-note; and through all its variations, from encouragement to admonition and warning, it cannot change that ground-tone. It appeals to the goodness of God to lead men to repentance. It takes the words of St. John as its invariable directory, "We love God, because he first loved us." Though it presents the divine goodness as manifesting itself in judgments as well as in mercies, yet, back of all inflictions, back of all punishments, here or here-

after, it opens to our view the everlasting heaven of God's infinite love; — as you have sometimes seen, when clouds darken the horizon, and storm hangs in the sky from pole to pole, at length a parting between the thick folds of the tempest, leaving one clear space through which you look up into the boundless expanse of sunshine that reigns above. So, in the gospel of universal salvation, God's love breaks through every darker scene in his providence, and gilds the thunder-cloud of judgment itself with celestial glory. Infinite goodness is the beginning and end of all things. From this comes the influence which the doctrine relies upon to convert sinners, to perfect saints, and to advance all the varied interests of religion in the world.

Now, a person who has been indoctrinated, from his youth up, in the persuasion that all which religion is good for, in this world, is just to save us from hell hereafter, and to introduce us into heaven, — he cannot understand how there should be any religion at all in the gospel of which we have spoken; because it recognizes no endless perdition, by the fear of which to drive men to serve God, and because it even allows no

punishment, but such as is paternal in its nature. He says that such a doctrine is irreligious in its influence; and he thinks so. He says that, on this ground, there is no use in religion; that if all are to be saved at last, there is no reason why we should trouble ourselves with a holy life, to secure that result for ourselves; and that we may as well give way to all sin, in that case, and take our pleasure as we live. Wherever this notion of religion prevails, there must be felt a very strong and conscientious antipathy to the gospel of universal grace. For it is plain, that if the service of God, in the present life, were so great a burden that nothing but the fear of eternal damnation could drive people into it, and keep them steadfast in it; if it were true, that religion consists in obeying God, not through love, but by the force of terror; if the chief value of it were, that it secures our everlasting welfare hereafter, and that it is only as a ticket of admission, worthless in itself, but which we must provide ourselves with now, in order to have a pass to that high feast in heaven, — if this were really the state of the matter, then indeed we should be obliged to acknowledge that our views of the

gospel are of irreligious influence. It is plain that they cannot produce such religion as this. I think, however, you need not be reminded that there neither is, nor can be, any true religion, but what flows from the love of God, and bears its own reward with it, "full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." St. John says, "We love him, because he first loved us." And our Saviour has shown us, by his own example, that we cannot be his disciples, unless it is as our "meat and our drink to do the will of our Father in heaven." Such was the spirit in which Christ served God; and except we have his spirit, we are none of his.

We have now pointed out one set of causes, which have operated, more or less, in all ages, to call forth the reproach spoken of. But there is also another set of causes operating the same way, — causes that lie still deeper, and that occupy a wider space in the human heart.

There are elements of personal vanity, of proud exclusiveness, of revenge, and of all hateful passions, lurking in every man's bosom; and the principle of impartial, universal salvation, comes in direct conflict with all these, and irritates them

wherever they exist, — provokes them into murmurings and complaints. Go to a man who really loves his race with unbounded philanthropy, convince him that all share in the equal love of God, and are heirs of eternal blessedness, — and he will rejoice in the conviction "with joy unspeakable and full of glory," because it perfectly accords with his own benevolent heart. But give the same assurance to a man who is at enmity with his neighbor, — only make him see distinctly how it bears on the case of that very individual whom he hates; and he does not like it, — there is a repugnance to it, here, in the elements at work in his breast. He is indeed glad that he himself is to be saved; and so far he is pleased with the doctrine. His very selfishness leads him to delight in it, as long as he keeps every thing else out of sight. But when he is made to feel that the same infinite good-will and blessing reach to his neighbor, also, it spoils the whole for him. He cannot bear to hear it enforced with that particular reference. Proclaim it for all besides, and be welcome! but not for the object of his hate! The Elder Brother, in the parable, found himself in sore vexation, on

this account. And he does not stand alone. I believe the most numerous sect in the world, is the sect of the Elder Brother. It embraces multitudes out of every denomination. Even many Universalists, — professed Universalists, at least, — seem to belong to it. For I have observed that, whenever there happens to be any class of their fellow-creatures, black or white, whom they have shut out from their charities, either for political reasons, or from personal anti-Christian antipathies, they wince at the application of their own doctrine to the case. They cannot endure it; "for the carnal mind within them is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Again: there are other evil propensities within us, of a similar tendency. Our personal vanity, or rather, our ambitious love of distinction, does not very readily submit to the truth, that all mankind shall be raised to an equality with ourselves. Secretly, and perhaps, unconsciously, we want that some should be placed below us, to give us respectable prominence, and the pleasure of looking down upon them; or that they should be wholly shut out, so that we may have the gratification of exclusive privilege, — which is very

dear to the unsanctified heart. The most of people have a love of aristocracy in its bad sense; they like to bring those who are above them down to their own level, but not those who are below them, up to an equality. You may detect this disposition working in all classes; and in none more than in such as cry out against it the most bitterly. Now, wherever this feeling prevails, it is offended at the idea of universal salvation. It naturally inclines the person to choose a religion that gratifies it with the promise of an exclusive share in God's favor at present, and an exclusive heaven hereafter. A heaven that is not select, but the final home of all, is no heaven to an ungodly pride; and grace that is not discriminative, but free, is no grace to the whole sect of the Elder Brother. No wonder they cry out against it. They did so in ancient times; why should they not now?

To this list of evil passions, which stand in hostile array against the gospel, we must add all the lusts of the world "from whence come wars and fightings among men." The elements of cruelty in the human heart, the destructive propensities, the eagerness to witness the sufferings

of others, — an eagerness so widely prevalent and so intense, that, on any occasion when there is a prospect of its being gratified, it will bring tens of thousands together from the city, and thousands from the country, to feast their eyes upon the sight. If you wished to call together the greatest possible number of human creatures, the most effectual way would probably be, to give notice that there was to be a public execution, open to the view of all who come. If you should appoint it for to-morrow morning, before sun-rise even, only send the news abroad to-night for fifty miles around, and before day-light all the great avenues to your city would be choked with the thronging crowds. How the multitudes would run at the word! how every foot of ground, and every house-top, balcony, and window, within sight of the fatal spot, would be flooded by one vast, pressing, dense mass, with their eyes strained towards the scaffold, impatient for the death-struggle! Women, as well as men, — and this, too, not in a horde of wild savages, but in a community as polished and enlightened as there ever was on the face of the earth! Ah, my friends, there is a great deal more of the tiger in

the human character, than is generally sup ose . And every drop of tiger-blood there is in the heart of men, will fight against the doctrine of universal salvation. Can you wonder that it is so much reproached ?

Yes, all the lusts of the world "from whence come wars and fightings among us," are at enmity with "the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men." There is the love of martial glory, that exults in its fields of carnage; there is the passion of private revenge, that plays its part on a narrower field; there are the ranklings of envy, that pines at the sight of another's good; there are the every-day bickerings, and strifes, and petty resentments, — all these have a large share in men's feelings; and how can we expect that they will harmonize with the doctrine of infinite and impartial love ?

When I consider how much o harisaism and false religion there is even in Christendom, opposed, as they are, in their very spirit to the purer principles of the Gospel, — when I think how much pride, selfishness, exclusiveness, cruelty, and strife, there are perpetually at work in the world, I cease to wonder at the tide of re-

proach that sets, like an angry sea, against the truth of "the living God, who is the Saviour of all men." I see it to be according to the natural law of the case, that all these unholy elements should go counter to that doctrine, and incline people to prefer a religion which will furnish them with some gratification and compromise. It is a great mistake to suppose that the unsanctified passions of men lead them to choose mercy rather than sacrifice, either in their faith, or in their practice. The carnal heart itself can very willingly perform sacrifice, especially if it be well paid for the trouble; but it cannot love God supremely, and our neighbor as ourselves, nor can it be made even to pretend to do so, except on hire.

I have thus endeavored to lay open the general, as well as the particular, causes of the reproach spoken of in our text. Did time permit, I should be glad to dwell more positively than I have done, on the moral and religious influence of the Gospel of universal salvation, and to enforce its lesson on its believers. But at this late hour, I can only commit the whole subject to

your own consciences, in the words of St. Paul in another passage: "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, teacheth us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." May God grant us the spirit of obedience to this faith, through our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Engraved by A.B.Walter Philada.

Eben Fisher.

Printed by R.Andrews

SERMON VI.

HOPE.

BY REV. EBENEZER FISHER.

"Hope thou in God." — Psalm xlii. 5.

Amid the troubles, and discouragements of the world, which are many; it is well to keep alive a cheering *hope* within the soul. It will be of great service to us to bear in mind, that to such a hope, God lends encouragement. The hope to which the writer of this Psalm exhorts his disquieted and downcast soul, has not regard to any specific thing, it is a *general* hope in God, and may encourage us to cherish a similar hope in him, as the Giver of all "good and perfect gifts," with whom are in store, if not the precise gifts which we expect, such, at least, as shall be sufficient for our real needs. This *general* hope in God, is finely expressed in the discourse on hope,

in the eighth chapter of Romans, where the Apostle declares that "we are saved by hope;" "but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it; likewise, the spirit helpeth our infirmities; for *we know not what we should pray for as we ought;* in this there seems to be pictured, the general outlooking of the soul toward a better state, and a deliverance, of which the specific particulars are not clearly apprehended. It is a hopeful waiting, for a glorious "manifestation," whose unknown modes and issues God shall shape aright.

Next to a good conscience, the thing most to be desired is a good hope; and even where there is a bad conscience, it is a good hope, to hope for a better. Nearly all of God's gifts to men, demand of them some appropriate labor, in order to the production of the benefits they were intended to produce. Hope alone is free. It is God's gift showered upon every condition of human life, that none may be without some inward witness of the divine care and love.

It is one of the most important auxiliaries, in maintaining that elasticity of the human soul, by which it rebounds against temptation, sin, and

sorrow. It gives that buoyancy, which enables to surmount the great trials, and contend successfully in the severe struggles of life. We can labor in the face of discouragements, we can recover from reverses, endure afflictions, and digest sorrows, so long as hope remains. But when hope flies, all seems lost, for it should be the last to depart from any human heart while life remains. God has made her blessed ministrations appropriate to all conditions of life. She is not too proud for the cottage, but in the humblest home she finds an appropriate place, and what is more proper to the lowliest, than that which bids them look upward? She is not too poor for the palace, and wretched indeed beneath its diadem, is the loftiest head on earth, if hope be precluded.

The exercise of the speculative powers of our nature, forms no small portion of our being, doing, and suffering even in this bodily state, and this material world. For every *act* which we do, the busy mind shapes, and compares, many schemes, and calculates many possible results. As Nature, the fruitful Mother, sheds millions of seeds of every kind, upon the earth in Autumn,

of which few germinate in the Spring, and infinitely fewer come to maturity; so the restless fancy, weaves endless webs, of possible actions, positions, and results, of which only here and there one are realized. The present, only, is ours to act in, and it is the most pitiable delusion to forget to act; but all the exhaustless range of the future, is freely open to our hope, and in all the wide, and varied realms of possibility it may range at pleasure. The earth alone furnishes us with experience, and, in one sense, the narrow thread of the passing moment contains all our actual life; we are not what we have been — we are not what we shall be — we are what we are. But Hope, has all space for her theatre, and all time for her play.

A thousand times, has Hope made your little children grow up to beautiful maturity, and shed on them the fresh vigor of manhood, blended with the captivating innocence of childhood. A thousand times has Hope brought back the absent one, and though often disappointed, yet never destroyed, renewed untiringly the pleasing picture. The captive sets in his cell, and Hope sits by his side; she pictures to him the joys of freedom,

and the imagination is sweeter to him, who famishes for that precious boon, than the reality is to us, who are sated with its enjoyment. Hope solaces the sick man, with the anticipation of returning health, when the feeble pulse shall bound again, and the sad frame no longer droop and flag, with exhaustion, but flow brimming full with the joyous currents of health, and vivacity. If she cannot soften the rugged foreground of life, she invites the eye to some happier perspective, and to the traveller, she discloses the place of rest; and the sheltered haven to him whom the tossing waves and driving winds assail; above the labor she elevates the shining reward; and over the valley, points to the mountain-top.

Hope, though common, is never common-place. What we shape, and picture, in the imagination, is always more intense, and decided, than the facts of real life. He whose great hope is for wealth, hopes for no ordinary amount, but his imaginary accumulations rival the possessions of the most opulent. So, also, he who climbs in hope the steeps of fame, sees in his vision no one above him. The mind, indeed, as she stretches her wings into the vast unknown, never holds a level

course; either she wings her flight upward in hope, or urges her dark and heavy way, downward to despair.

There are those, who fancy in their hard materialism, that they wish only for the present, and what they call the actual. Give them a liberal share in what is now being distributed; houses, lands, ships, gold and silver, or power and place, and they will agree to relinquish the speculative and the ideal. "Give me," says such an one, "what is solid, and tangible, and you may have all the fanciful and ideal." But were it allowed to human weakness, and folly, to make the experiment, it would soon appear that no dungeon could be so gloomy, as that in which the granting of such a wish would immure him who makes it. There is not to be found in the last, and vilest winnowings of the great heap of humanity, a more meagre wretch than the mere miser; yet even he, sordid and earthly as he is, cannot be, in any moment, content with what there is, and what he has, but while the bodily hands grip closely what he has, the hands of the mind are stretched out, and grasping for more. Even such a grovelling muck-worm as he, lives in his ideal, and by *his hope*.

But leaving him, of whom we speak only to show the inevitable tendency of our nature to hope; let us turn from the base and narrow exception which he and his hope furnish; to those purer and better longings, which shape the aspirations of the greater part of mankind. These, even human guilt and sin cannot wholly destroy, — and it is a pleasing thought, that the most depraved of our race thus render homage to virtue, in the ideal longings of their souls. For the heartfelt hope, even of the most abandoned, surely looks towards our escape from sin. Is there a wretch in the world, if the offer were made him, by turning his hand over, to become as pure and lofty in virtue as an angel, who would not do it? If you ask: "Why then does he not make an effort to attain this purity? I in return ask, Why do you and I let slip any opportunity of coming nearer to it? When we answer for ourselves, we shall also have answered for our fellow-man. I cannot believe that there is a wretch in the world, who is so lost that his wish does not rise toward goodness. Even those who declare that men are totally depraved, also affirm that they crowd eagerly to hear Universalist

preaching, because it accords with the natural desires of the human heart. But the best hope Universalism gives them, is that every sin, and sinful desire, shall be wholly sundered from them, "as far as the east is from the west." If this accords with their natural desires, then surely they do not love sin, for its own sake. Does not the Apostle say, that the creation, though subjected to sin, is "subjected in hope?" and from this we must understand that its "hope" is in opposition to sin. This holy and blessed hope cannot be wholly lost on any human being; but its chaste ideal tends to purify, and exalt the mind. If one of those blessed rays of light from a brighter world, which tell us that the darkness shall not last always, and witness to us with the Scriptures, that, "the Lord will not cast off forever." It is God's mark and seal upon the human soul, an ineffaceable witness that it is his, and that he intends to reclaim it.

Thus varied and unceasing, so consolatory, cheering, and uplifting, are the offices and ministrations of *hope*, in the mind of man. Yet if this hope, has no sanction or foundation in truth, — if it is the mere wandering of thoughts which are

but fleeting fugitives, of an hour, escaped from the walls of fact to the wilds of fancy; — then indeed, it can only claim our attention as the pleasing dream of a nature, "uneasy and confined at home." But it is not so: — God, in his holy Word, has taught us to hope. Not with a meagre and narrow, not with a temporal and dying hope; — but with a hope dignified, and divine — *a hope in God.* "Hope thou in God," is the Psalmist's exhortation and direction to his soul; and again, "My soul fainteth for thy salvation, but I hope in thy word."

Abraham "against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations." If a belief in hope was thus meritorious in him, it cannot be weak or unworthy in us

God, by two immutable things, — his promise and his oath, — sets hope before us as our "refuge," and makes it the "anchor of the soul," reaching to that within the vail. He declares to us, that we are "*saved* by hope," and that even this whole creation, sin smitten and sorrowing, is subjected to the bondage of corruption under which it groans; — not absolutely and finally, but "*in hope.*"

Thus does God, the Benignant Father, sanctify the worthy and religious hopes of his creatures, and encourage that aspiration, by which his darkened children, emulate the light, and anticipate the peace, whose perfect joys are such as, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man" fully to conceive of them.

Hope — worthy, religious hope, then, is no more a dream; but the soul's lofty speculations of good have a sanction. God's witnessing voice thus proclaims, that our ideal imaginings, which shape something better than that which exists; — peace beyond this strife, — light beyond this darkness; — and by the lacerated spirit inly mourning, union beyond this parting; and life beyond this death; are more than mere delightful dreams. He takes the side of the better nature, and sanctions its righteous and holy desires.

Blessed! thrice blessed, then, be the ministry of his heavenly hope! Were it not for her, earth would have few songs, labor would weary, and duty would despair.

But *now abideth* Faith, Hope, Love, these three; Love shall outlive the others, because

Faith's promise, and Hope's vision, shall be fulfilled by Love; and the bow of Hope, no longer needed as a witness of God's covenant, no more bent to shoot an arrow against sin, or doubt; shall be dissolved in the light of the cloudless heavens, for its fading image shall vanish in the rear of the last retreating storm.

J. Andrews & H. W. Smith

J. D. Williamson

SERMON VII.

THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE GOSPEL.

BY REV. I. D. WILLIAMSON

"For I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was taught it except by the revelation of Jesus Christ."—GAL. i. 11, 12.

The conversion of St. Paul and his subsequent history, are among the most remarkable incidents recorded in the New Testament. Born a Jew, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and belonging to the strictest sect of the Pharisees, he commenced his career as a bitter enemy of the religion of Christ. Clothed with authority from the High Priest, he persecuted the Christians "even into strange cities, and when they were put to death, gave his voice against them." But suddenly, and for no earthly reason, he pauses, and immediately commences preaching the Gos-

pel which he had despised. And he is no ordinary preacher. He understands, at once, all the mysteries of the new religion — he meets its learned adversaries in the arena of open discussion, and confounds them by his arguments. He establishes churches, and instructs them thoroughly, in all the principles and precepts of the gospel. He writes letters, which evince the most thorough acquaintance with the whole system of Christ in all its parts, and with his voice and pen, labors more abundantly and successfully than any other of the disciples of his day. In view of these facts, it seems natural to inquire, how Paul obtained this thorough knowledge of this new and unknown religion? The brief history of its author was not written. There were no libraries containing expositions or commentaries, to which he had access. He had not seen Jesus in the flesh, or heard a word from his lips, nor did he, after the scene that occurred on his way to Damascus, go to Jerusalem to take counsel, or get instructions from the disciples; but he went forthwith to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Three years he preached, before he went up to Jerusalem, and abode with Peter fif-

teen days, and even then, he saw no other of the disciples, except James, the Lord's Brother.

How, then, did he obtain his deep and thorough insight into all the mysteries of the religion of Jesus? The text gives the only answer that can meet the circumstances of the case. "I neither received it of man, neither was taught it, except by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

The Gospel, then, is an authoritative revelation of divine truth, which rests upon its own immovable basis, and claims, from the reason of man, the subscription of faith.

Now, the very idea of a revelation necessarily supposes, that the thing revealed lies, originally, without the domain of science or philosophy. There is no necessity, that God should interpose with a special revelation to teach Astronomy, or Geology, or Botany, or any of the exact sciences, because all these are within the grasp of the intellect, and may be learned by the diligent exercise of the powers which the Creator has given to man. It is not so with the sacred truths, of which the Gospel treats. God, his character and attributes, his purposes, and the principles of his government: *Man*, his origin, his relations to the

spiritual and invisible, his duty as affected by those relations, and all that relates to his final destiny, These are matters that are beyond the province of unaided reason. No depths or profundity of scientific knowledge — no powers of the human intellect, can solve these problems, or penetrate these mysteries. If made known at all, it must be done by revelation; if seen at all, it must be by the vision of faith.

No man, by searching, can find out God, for the simple reason, that the inferior cannot measure the superior. God must come down to us, for we cannot go up to him.

So, also, of God's designs and purposes. No efforts of reason, no experiments of science, no demonstrations of mathematics, or inductions of philosophy, can fathom the Infinite Mind, or penetrate the cabinet of his counsels, to unfold the secrets of his will. If that will is known at all, God must reveal it.

In like manner, there is a darkness, dense and impervious as night itself, over the untried and unexplored future, and what awaits us there, no wisdom of earth can predict. On the contrary, every ray of light that shines upon that darkness,

and every item of truth that can be affirmed of man's future must come by revelation from that Being who controls the destinies of men and angels, to whom the darkness and the light are alike, and whose vision sweeps the whole circle of the past, the present, and that which is to come. These, I take to be matters so simple, that none can fail of their comprehension, and so obviously true, that none can dispute them. Of course, then, the Apostle was right in saying, that the Gospel is not after man. It is not the child of the wisdom of the world, nor bears it the marks of an earthly origin. It differs from human inventions in the following particulars:—

I. — IT IS AUTHORITATIVE.

It was a peculiarity of the teachings of Christ which astonished the people that listened, that "he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." In this respect, his Gospel is not after man.

When man would present the world with a doctrine, or system, and persuade us of its truth, he seeks to do it logically. He begins with some of the axioms of science, and from these he rea-

sons, until he arrives at a given conclusion. Again, he takes that conclusion, as the basis of his argument, and leads us on to another conclusion. Or he commences with certain fixed and definite facts of nature or experience; and by a system of induction leads us on to the desired conclusion. In either case, we proceed carefully, step by step, and may see and appreciate all the reasons that bear upon every point, and comprehend the process by which the conclusion is evolved from the principles, or the facts, and the relation that they bear to each other.

It is not so with the Gospel. It cannot be so with a revelation from God; because its truths lie without the domain of science. They cannot be evolved from the axioms of science, the principles of philosophy, or the facts of experience. If they could, there would be no need of a revelation to bring them to light, for the reason, that man could discover them for himself, and without aid. It must, therefore, from the necessity of the case, rest upon authority, and the one who announces it must speak, as Jesus spoke, — authoritatively.

Hence, when we look into the Bible, we everywhere find this mode of teaching. It is so in the Old Testament. When Moses announced the Laws of God — Laws which were never discovered by any of the wise men of earth, and which are so manifestly divine, that they have found their way, in principle, into the jurisprudence of the enlightened world, and cannot be dispensed with, in any tolerable form of government — we do not find him engaged in deep and profound metaphysical disquisitions, or laboring to show the people the process of reasoning, by which he had elaborated a system of ethics from the principles of philosophy, or the facts of nature and experience. And the reason is, he did not get them in that way. They came by revelation. He was not taught them by the *Savans* of Egypt, but by the spirit of God; and hence, he enforces them, not by the syllogisms of logic, but by the authority of God, and his word is, "Thus saith the Lord."

In like manner, the old prophets taught authoritatively. They did not obtain their knowledge of the events they predicted, from nature, or science, or experience. They did not learn their lessons by

synthesis, or analysis, by induction or analogy, but by revelation from God. Hence, you do not find them arguing the case, and endeavoring to convince the people of the truth of their prophecies, by reasoning from cause to effect, or from premises to conclusions. The truth is, in many instances there were no data, upon which human reason could found even a plausible argument, that the event predicted would come to pass.

Take, by way of illustration, the prophecy of Ezekiel in regard to the downfall of Tyre, in which the utter destruction of that city is foretold. At the time of the utterance of this prophecy, Tyre was one of the most flourishing and opulent cities of the world. Its walls and temples of adamant were reared high; their foundations deep, and their proportions fair. The commerce of the city was wide and extensive, and its wealth abundant. To the eye of human wisdom, there was nothing more improbable, than that such a city should be utterly annihilated, and so swept, in every vestige, from the earth, that its site should be a barren rock, used only as a place for fishermen to spread and dry their nets.

The prophet did not, therefore, attempt to show the people the process of reasoning by which he had arrived at the conclusion, that such should be the end of Tyre. The truth is, there was no such process, for he received it by revelation. Hence, he speaks outright, as one having authority. "I will destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers. I will scrape her dust from her, and make her as the top of a rock. It shall be a place for spreading of nets in the midst of the sea," — is his prediction; and the reason, the *only* reason, he gives is, "I have spoken it, saith the Lord God."

Now, what I wish to say, is this: No man who had arrived at the conclusion, that Tyre was thus to be destroyed, from any facts that were within his knowledge, or from the probable operation of any causes, then in existence, would have hazarded his reputation as a sane man by making such an announcement, unaccompanied by the reasons on which it was founded. On the contrary, he would have shown the depth of his penetration, and the profundity of his philosophy, by presenting an array of facts and arguments bearing upon the point, and the process of reasoning

by which he had reached the conclusion. But nothing of this do we find, and the reason is, he did not evolve this announcement from any facts, or known causes, or by dint of reasoning from cause to effect. It came by revelation, and for this cause he announced it by authority, and left it there, without a word, to stand or fall upon its own basis; well persuaded that the result would prove, as that old wave-beaten rock, where Tyre once stood, this day proves, that the prediction was true to the very letter. And thus it is manifest, that his teachings were not after man, for he taught as one having authority to proclaim truth from God.

This peculiarity is even more strikingly presented in the teachings of Christ. We do not find him propounding his glorious doctrines, and then entering upon a discourse, to demonstrate their truth, by philosophical induction, or scientific demonstration; nor does he attempt to convince the people of their truth, by displaying before them the steps, in that method of reasoning, by which he had made his grand discoveries. He does not proclaim his doctrines as discoveries that he had made by his superior intellectual powers, nor

attempt to enforce faith upon his hearers by dint of logic. But he informs us distinctly, that God had sent him to bear witness to the truth, which he had received from the Father. Conscious that he was clothed with authority from on high, and that the seal of God himself was upon the commission he bore, he announced the truth in its simplicity, and his reason was, "Verily, verily I say unto you," it is thus, or so; and there he left it, to stand upon his authority, or stand not at all. Truly, then, may we say, the Gospel is not after man. It speaks not in hesitation and doubt. It comes not backed up by syllogisms and demonstrations, and weighing probabilities in nicely-adjusted logical scales; but it speaks authoritatively, "This *is* the way, walk ye in it."

Before leaving this part of my subject, I take leave to say, that, in my judgment, submission to the authority of Christ, as a divine teacher, sent and authorized of God to announce truth to the world, is an essential element in the Christian character. It is not enough that we are willing to receive the Gospel because it appears beautiful, and reasonable, and accords with some

previously-adopted philosophy of our own. If we are indeed Christ's disciples, we shall receive him as the divine and infallible teacher, and believe his Gospel, because, and if need be, *only* because, he taught it, and it comes to us as a revelation of eternal truth.

Nor should this revelation be lowered down to a dependence upon human wisdom, or made the satellite of the philosophy of man. It is rather of itself the highest and truest of all philosophy — the philosophy which has God for its Author — the central sun of eternal light and truth; and all human orbs do shine the brightest, when they reflect most of this light divine. It is no honor to divine revelation to say, that it accords with philosophy; but it is the highest honor that can be conferred upon any system of philosophy to say, that it accords with divine truth. Human books are recommended by the fame of their authors. This old Book of books, has God for its Author; and its sacred truths should never be frittered away to meet the ever-changing forms and phases of the philosophy of the world. If the Gospel and human philosophy ever meet on a level, they must meet by bringing

philosophy up, not by bringing the Gospel down. The latter is a revelation from God, the embodiment of divine truth, the highest of all truth. The other is the offspring of the wisdom of man, and I certify you again, that the "Gospel is not after man."

II. THE GOSPEL IS NOT AFTER MAN, BECAUSE ITS TRUTHS ARE ANNOUNCED AS ABSOLUTE.

All truth is absolute. It exists in and of itself. It exists *positively*, as standing upon its own immovable foundation, and is utterly incapable of being changed, increased, or diminished. Such is truth. But man is ignorant, and there are, in fact, few things that he can announce as absolutely true.

There is a shade of uncertainty over the past, and much of its history is fabulous, or painted in colors too bright, or too dim. The *present* is with us. But much of it is seen at a distance, or through a false medium, which prevents us from beholding the reality of things; and of the past or present, it is difficult to affirm what is the absolute truth, except in a narrow circle.

As for the future, we cannot penetrate its darkness, nor announce with certainty one abso-

lute truth, in regard to its realities. The result is, that we necessarily deal much in conjectures, and are compelled to be satisfied with possibilities, or, at best, with probabilities. But the Gospel announces no conjectures or probabilities, but truth, absolute and positive truth, which exists at all times, and depends, not upon human agency or human power, human faith, or unbelief, but upon God himself, as its Author and Finisher. It occurs to me that a want of attention to this peculiarity of the Gospel, has been the cause of much blundering and error.

We have said that the Gospel is an authoritative announcement of absolute truth. Take now the great and absorbing subject of human destiny, and let the inquiry be, what is the truth in regard to that subject? Human wisdom cannot answer that question; and it is remarkable, that, in all its attempts, it arrives at nothing more or better, than a conjecture, a possibility, or an uncertain hypothesis.

Thus, the theology which man has fashioned, after his own heart, teaches you on this wise.

A great plan of salvation has been formed. Ample and abundant provisions have been made

for the salvation of our entire race; and now, if man will repent, and believe the Gospel, he may be saved, with an everlasting salvation, and his destiny shall be an eternity at the right hand of God. This is called God's greatest and most glorious truth, as revealed to man. Excuse me, but I insist that it is no truth at all. So far as the question of human destiny is concerned, there is not a particle of absolute truth in it. It is a mere hypothesis, containing both the premises and the conclusion, both of which may fail, for aught men or angels can know, or God has revealed. A great plan has been formed. Aye, but will it be consummated? That is the question, that your man-made Gospel does not answer.

If man will repent and believe, he may be saved. But suppose he does not repent and believe, what then? Why, then he will not be saved. In that case, where is your truth of salvation, as the destiny of man? The fact is, there was no such truth announced, in this other "Gospel, which is not another." It does not tell us what *shall be*, but only what may be. It does not give us the real truth, but only a supposition of what

may be true, in case certain other things are true, and which is quite as likely to turn out false as any way.

Or, if you look upon the opposite side of the picture, the case is the same. Endless and intolerable woe, as the destiny of some portion of our race, is an important item in the theology of man, and full often this is pronounced to be a solemn truth of God. At the same time, it is fully and freely admitted, that eternal salvation is quite possible for all men. If they will only repent and believe, they shall all be saved. Suppose now they should all repent and believe, what then? Then, of course, they would all be saved. Where, then, would be your truth of endless damnation, as the destiny of some men? Does not the child see, that there is no such truth announced in this system? It was a mere hypothesis of yours, a thing that might be, and might not be true. And thus it is, that the theology of man, so far as human destiny is concerned, announces no truth to the world. It does not even pretend to inform us what the absolute truth is. It deals in suppositions and hypotheses. It makes the plan of human redemption a

grand experiment, that God has set in operation, the result of which neither the wisdom of man nor the revelation of God can announce. It talks of salvation, but not as a "fixed fact," or an eternal truth — rather as the possible result of an experiment, which may, or may not, turn out favorably. And of damnation it treats in the same uncertain and doubtful strain. Upon that most interesting and momentous of all subjects, the destiny of the race, it has no word to say, save this one word: "The whole matter is fearfully uncertain," for our eternal interests are suspended upon the hazard of a die, which may turn one way, and may also turn another; and what the truth is, which way it will positively turn, God himself does not know, or, if he does, he chooses to keep it to himself. This is the doctrine that is after man.

But the Gospel is not after man. It proclaims the real truth, which will stand while the world standeth. Mark how the truth comes in its reality and absoluteness, when it comes from the sanctuary above, and speaks by revelation from God. Take that old Promise, which God made to the Patriarch, and which Paul calls the Gos-

pel: "By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore. And thy seed shall possess the gates of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

Here is truth for you, and no hypothesis. No talk of a great plan, that may fail — no supposition of what may be, in case certain other things come to pass; but the positive announcement of the absolute truth, and that, too, under the sanction of the oath of him, who, because he could swear by none greater, sware by himself — not that we might speculate about probabilities, but that "we might have strong consolation," and "lay hold upon that hope, which is as an" anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast.

So, also, the blessed Saviour taught the truth: "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands." "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me, and him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out." And so Paul testifies: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ

shall all be made alive." Christ shall subdue all things unto himself, and "shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and God shall be all in all." There you have the truth in regard to human destiny. No hypothesis is that. No proposition of what God will do, if man will help him — no experiment of doubtful issue is there. But truth, — true if men believe, true if they do not believe, true now, true henceforth, and true while God liveth, to whose name be the glory forever.

Let these illustrations suffice. They will show the difference between the revelation of God, and the teachings of man. The fact is, man *cannot* announce the absolute truth if he would, and, therefore, he is obliged to weigh probabilities, and balance chances, and his selfish heart is well pleased, if, by some sleight-of-hand, he can secure to himself two chances to his neighbor's one. But when God speaks, you get the truth, and no game of hazard, in which man's eternal destinies are at stake.

It is this definite announcement of absolute truth, that constitutes one of the peculiar characteristics of the Gospel, as distinguished from the

wisdom of man. This, too, is the feature which distinguishes Universalism from the system of the day. They propound hypotheses and speculations, and leave man's future, dark, uncertain, and cheerless. Universalism announces a glorious immortality for man, as the destiny of our race, and the truth of God, beyond all doubt or uncertainty. And here is the "hiding of its power." Take this away, and you remove the tower of its hope. If the day shall ever come when it shall cease to utter this great truth, its glory will depart; and if its ministry shall turn from this, it will lose the right arm of its power.

This, and this only, can reach the heart, and meet the wants of the human soul. I grant, that in the day of prosperity, when the skies are bright, and the earth is green and beautiful, theories may charm, philosophy may amuse, and the tinsel and ornament of the words of man's wisdom may dazzle the eyes, and captivate the affections, for a season. But full well do I know, that, in the day of our calamity, when the heavens are dark, and the earth dim — when affliction's great deep is broken up, upon us —

the hearth-stone is desolate, and the heart bleeds and breaks, as its idols are taken away — *then* does the soul turn away from the follies of men, as from the deceitful mirage, that cheats the traveller upon the arid waste of the desert, and run with eager haste to drink the water that gushes from the Rock of Ages. Then does the fainting spirit feel, that it needs a firmer hope, and a holier trust, than man can give, and that it can be satisfied with nothing short of a "thus saith the Lord."

I look around upon this congregation, and upon this place, so hallowed by the sacred memories of the past. I see the habiliments of mourning are here, testifying that death has been at work. Familiar faces, that in former days were wont to greet us here, are here no more. Even the watchmen upon the walls of our Zion are falling, and the old soldiers of the cross are leaving the battle-field, for the crowns and the harps of heaven. And shall we who remain play with toys, or seek to amuse the world with visions and fancies of man? Nay; for the eternal realities of the universe are around us, and with these we have to do. The soul that is in us crieth out

unto God, and the prayer that comes up from the centre of its being is, "Lord, give us thy truth." Blessed be his name, the answer to that prayer comes in the Gospel of Christ, — that Gospel which is not after man, but is taught by the revelation of him of Nazareth — that pearl of priceless value — that cordial to the wounded, bleeding heart — that balm to the smitten spirit. God help us to hold it fast, and say with the Poet: —

> "Should all the forms that men devise,
> Assault my faith with treacherous art,
> I'd call them vanity and lies,
> And bind the Gospel to my heart."

Engraved by A.B.Walter Phila.da.

A. G. Lamie.

SERMON VIII.

COMING TO GOD.

BY REV. A. G. LAURIE.

'O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat."—JOB xxiii. 3.

So exclaims Job under the pressure of his great calamity. The successive and crushing disasters, so dramatically related, which had rapidly brought him down from the height of prosperity and enjoyment, and overwhelmed him with wretchedness, though all of them, immediately traceable to merely material agencies, were clearly and truly recognized by him, if not as the operations of divine grace, at least, as the ordinations at a Divine Providence. Unlike too many of ourselves, with all the advantages of a Christian instruction, Job could look through and

beyond the action of intermediate and secondary causes, to him who is the prime cause of all; and whether the occurrences of his life were conducted through a prolonged series of visible media, or were the results of those viewless forces, whose effects are more readily seen to be the workings of Omnipotence, he felt good and evil, — the prosperity of his former, and the various misery of his subsequent state — to be attributable finally to God? "*Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*" is the response to his wife, in which he at once vindicates God's justice, and acknowledges His sovereignty.

This distinct and direct apprehension of God, as the Author and Conductor of all the arrangements of the world, is undoubtedly, to some extent, to be attributed to the imperfection of physical science in the early ages. The Indian of our own Continent, the partially civilized man in all lands where a Deity is owned and worshipped, feels himself in closer contact with God by the absence of all those interposing processes of which he knows nothing, than the partially instructed resident of a more enlightened land.

We do not say that his piety is so intelligent, but it is more prompt and unquestioning, more credulous, to be sure, but more confident and devoted, too. While we have little sympathy with that pusillanimous faith which deprecates the advance of scientific discovery, as if the triumphs of science were the calamities of Christianity, we cannot be blind to the fact, that a superficial progress among the disclosures of science, unless accompanied by a corresponding cultivation of the devotional sentiments, and a more vigorous grasp of the principles of religion, has a tendency to alienate the mind and heart from God, by the obtrusion of such a multitude of intermediate agencies, as increase our distance, and divert our attention, from the primal Originator and Author of them all. It is true that much of this arises from our previous ignorance, and from the sudden and surprised sensations with which we find ourselves displaced from our fancied contiguity to God, — the intermediate space becoming occupied with material dispositions and arrangements, of which we had not dreamed, — while our eye, yet unaccustomed to the larger sweep now necessary to include him,

falls short of the mighty Being who sits behind them, projecting his works, harnessed with their controlling laws, upon the broad theatre of his creation. It is also true, that when we have made sufficient advance, when we have reached such an elevation on the high grounds of discovery, as to enable us to take a more commanding survey of the fields of Nature and Providence, a position from which the various details that have hitherto stood in detached prominence, monopolizing our attention, are seen to sink into place, and to blend in an economy of order and harmony, held together by the controlling lines of a few great principles, converging from every quarter to one point of combination, centering at the throne, and gathered in the grasp of God, then indeed the religious perceptions, hitherto obstructed in their way to him by the intervention of material processes, lately reckoned final, but now seen to be intermediate and subordinate, resume their true direction, and rest on their rightful object, and the religious convictions, trampling down the barriers of a superficial scepticism, lay hold more ardently and tenaciously than ever before, on the glorious

truth, that "*of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever.*" But until we reach this point, — and but few of us in ordinary life have either the inclination or the ability to do so, — unless our religious cultivation keep pace with our intellectual, the explanations which an immature science furnishes of the phenomena of Nature, and the visible operations of the Divine Government, have undoubtedly the effect of increasing our distance from our Maker, of fastening our attention upon the engine itself, and of appropriating to the regularity, and the beauty, and the powers of the machinery, a large share of the admiration and awe, which are due to its Author. And so, until we become familiar with the broad views which a more comprehensive instruction affords us, what we gain in intelligence, we are apt to lose in reverence and devotion; for "*a moderate taste of philosophy*," says Lord Bacon, "*is very apt to incline a man to Atheism, while a deep draught brings him back to God.*" Is not the child, gazing at the rainbow, and fancying he can discern the withdrawal of the Divine Hand, which has just paved, with many-hued beams, the bright

path of ascent by which his saints approach him, is not this child nearer his Creator, than the fluent scholar, who will elucidate for you the proximate causes of the lovely apparition, who will prate to you of reflection, and refraction, and prismatic rain-drops, and points of incidence, and deviation, and emergence? Does not the eye of the child pierce higher into the heavens, and the soul of the child nestle more closely and trustfully in the bosom of the Father, than the eye and the soul of the pseudo-philosopher, who contents himself with an acquaintance with the physical laws and constituents of the phenomenon, and pauses and turns away with indifference at the threshhold of the pavilion of the Omnipotent to which they conduct him? Now, in the primitive ages, in Job's day, men were children, in reference to physical science, and unconsciously overleaping many a wide tract of material process and contrivance, every natural wonder, or unusual providence, brought them, at once, face to face with God. It were well for us, if, in connection with our superior advantages, as men compared with them in our knowledge of nature, we entertained and cherished

their childlike persuasions of the constant proximity of the God of Nature and of Providence. For so we could scarcely fail to feel the frequent stirrings of the desire embodied in the text, the desire to hold communion with him in the dearest and most sacred of all the capacities he occupies towards us, as God of grace. "*Oh, that I knew where I might find him,*" says Job, "*that I might come even unto his seat.*"

Certainly, the difficulty of reaching Him is considerably enhanced to the man of hasty and impatient thought, by the intervention of those second causes, of whose offices and relations the imperfect information of most of us, gives us very partial and defective conceptions. Yet we may satisfy ourselves, by a very little consideration, that however lengthened the series of operations, God's power is just as indispensable to the maintainance of every process, to the origination of every impulse and movement that thrills along the chain, as if directly, and without the interposition of a single instrumentality between his fiat and its effect, he instantly achieved the result we are contemplating. You tell me that the doctrine of a particular providence is obselete, and

that God is now known to govern all things, and to produce all effects by general laws? Laws! What are God's laws? The expression of his will, — the modes by which his designs are accomplished. And who can assure me, that in every spot of his great universe, where, at this moment, one of these laws is operative, there, issuing it and applying it, there is not a present and active God? For me, suffer me to believe, to recognize my Omnipresent Maker, now, this instant, at my side, meting out to me each inhalation of the breath which animates me, and keeping in action, and mingling in their proper combinations, and animating with the requisite energy, all the forces and functions by which each pulsation of the vital fluid is propelled throughout my frame. For, besides its truth, this conviction has this very great advantage. If I am thus conscious of his vicinity to me in the processions of nature, and the experiences of life, he becomes to me a near God, and not a God afar off, in the economy of his grace; so that when temptation assails me, or sin has vanquished me, or trouble harasses me, I have no far interval of distance to surmount to reach him,

and no faithless doubts, as to whether, from his remote sanctuary, he will hear and help me. I do not need, like Job, to cry, "*Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!*" I have but to think, and he is beside me, and he anticipates the supplication of my need ere it finds utterance in my tongue, for noting and marking my every purpose, I feel that he beheld it, while it was yet forming in my heart. And with David I am able to say, "*I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.*"

To be able, at any point in the course of our lives, to have immediate recourse to God, at once to find his seat, and having reached it, to feel an assurance that it contains the very Being we seek, and not a dim and attenuated abstraction merely, is surely a consideration of some consequence to us, subjects of fear, and feebleness, and death, as we are. And yet, — besides that of which we have been speaking, incident to a condition of imperfect scientific culture, — there is an abstraction lying at the very threshhold of our endeavors to conceive of him, which we cannot remove without derogating from the dignity we

feel to be his due, and eventually involving ourselves in practices of superstition specially prohibited in the exhortations of his word. We know each other, and all things of which we have any distinct conceptions, through the media of vision, and form, and substance. But God we cannot see. His form, visible, perhaps, to angels, eludes the most solicitous search of mortal eye, and his substance is impalpable to human contact. "*He is a Spirit, and they who worship him, must worship him in spirit,*" see him by faith, and embrace him by love. The ordinary avenues of sense, by which we apprehend sublunary objects, are powerless to furnish us with an image of the Inscrutable. "*No man hath seen God at any time,*" says Jesus; and, "*to what, then, will ye liken God,*" asks Isaiah, "*or what likeness will ye compare unto him?*" The nearest approach to any substantial representation of him, given to our intellectual perceptions in the Bible, is one drawn from the least material of all physical things. "*God is Light,*" says St. John, "*and in Him is no darkness at all.*" Now, here we confess is a difficulty meeting and perplexing our very earliest inquiries after God, and one of so

embarrassing a kind, that in their unaided attempts to surmount it, men have very generally either descended to idolatry, embodying their conceptions of himself, or his attributes, in corporeal form, and "*so worshipped and served the creature*," rather than the Creator, or have filled his throne, on the other hand, with some dim and indefinite abstraction, too vague for the apprehension of the intellect, and of consequence, too meagre and insipid for the embrace of the heart. And yet, despite our embarrassment, in attempting to frame for ourselves an image of Him whom "*no human eye hath seen or can see*," we labor under no more insuperable difficulty, than when we attempt to portray to ourselves the true form of any human friend. For surely, we would not for a moment admit, that the identity of our acquaintance, that the personality of which, ourselves are conscious, resides in our bodies, or any, or all of their members. Is it of our hands, our feet, our heads, or any of our corporeal parts, we say, US? Slaves as we are to sense, and form, and substance, we are conscious that these are not *ourselves*, but *of us*; that we possess them, that we occupy and use them, — as God the sub-

stantialities of nature, — for our convenience, for the expression of our desires, and the accomplishment of our purposes, but that *we* are within them, and distinct from them, pervading them, and yet separable from them; that changing periodically as they do, till not a particle of what composes them now, was theirs ten years ago, *we* remain, with all our feelings, our memories, and hopes, what we have ever been, and that when they shall resolve back to the dust from which they were moulded, detached from them, and independent of them, we shall continue to live, and think, and feel forever. They are the means and the media of communication and intercourse between us and our fellow-spirits, and the instrumentalities by which we manage and use the inanimate world about us, but that which distinguishes us and our brethren from the rock and the sod, is itself the active and intelligent principle, the vital and rational being, which we feel to be ourselves, and which in others we admire and love. Of the same nature, though of dimensions grander far, is the God we seek. And divesting ourselves, as far as practicable, of the too tenacious associations of substance and mat-

ter, which cling to our most spiritual conceptions while reaching him through the material forms of nature by which he manifests himself. — as man's spirit through his bodily frame, — let us think of him, as distinct from them all, as our own personality, or that of some friend, from the corporeal fabric we temporarily inhabit; and capable of admiration and love for human spirits as we feel ourselves to be, when their conduct is such as to elicit these emotions, we shall experience how ample the power of the great Father Spirit, so glorious in his character, so beneficent in his providence, and so benignant in the purposes of his grace, to excite the profoundest reverence of our minds, and to secure the most ardent devotion of our hearts.

And yet, show I unto you a more excellent way to accomplish what Job desired so strongly, to reach the seat, and repose upon the bosom of the true and living God. Accustomed, as we have said, to deal with facts and visible forms, the human mind sustains itself with difficulty, when driven along a course of abstruse speculation and hypothesis. And there is perhaps no topic in which the maintenance of its power of

direct and firm progress is more precarious, than those which relate to the being and the constitution of an unseen God. The subject is so vast and vague, the object is so intangible and inappreciable by all the ordinary modes by which we pursue and acquire information! Now, frequently, nay, always, when we have suffered ourselves to be entangled in the mazes of intricate meditations on this theme, and the laboring thought has sunk under the weight of the oppressing mystery, and the most sacred realities of the spirit would have seemed fading into emptiness, and the sublime prospects of a future state, and the hopes of immortality, and the very being of God, and everything less corporeal than the poor, perishing materialities of this present world, have been shimmering in the mists of doubt, and threatening to go out in the darkness of an exhausted brain, how instant the transition effected by a resort to the series of plain facts recorded in the history of the Man, Christ Jesus! How conspicuous and encouraging the aspect of the re-revealed God! How clear the long, bright vista of life that stretches yonder, far past the limit of those open graves where

darkness ends, and light, increasing, boundless, endless light begins! And how lustrous the heaven, where, rescued from death, and redeemed from sin, and mingling with the angels, our race, our entire and happy race, beseige with song and acclamation that lofty throne, where sits the Sovereign, and the Saviour, and the Father God of all! Yes, a glance backward to the life, a recollection of the promises of Christ, and a look to the Cross, where he seals with his blood the truth of all he professed and taught, and the haze of doubt departs, and confidence returns; and while the present world sinks back in shadow, that to which it leads confronts us all a blaze with light, the light which pours from the face of him whom His Son discloses. Dizzy with wild and weary efforts to conceive of God, let us but turn to Christ, and there is such an air of homely and obvious truth in that Gospel life of his, as at once to put to flight all mystical illusions. For, won by the wisdom of his words, subdued by the power of his life, and satisfied by the evidence of his miracles, that he proceeded and came forth from God, when he speaks to us of the nature and design of the Divinity, we feel

assured he speaks only that which he had seen and heard in the bosom of God. Come to him, and cling to him, and no longer, like Job, shall we grope and cry, "*Oh that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat!*" Christ disperses the darkness from our minds, Christ furls away the clouds from the face of the Invisible, and the obscure void is filled with glory. Ah! and if we accede to his request, and give him, not only the assent of our faith, but the custody of our hearts, — if we but suffer our feet to follow His along the path he hath opened for us, oh! pardon, peace, and joy, in the true and living God, who occupies the throne to which he leads us, we recognize and claim the Father of our Spirits, and the Saviour of our souls.

May the Holy Spirit of the Father urge us into communion with the Son, that through the Son, we may reach and rest in the bosom of the Father.

Engraved by A.B. Walter Philada.

Saml. P. Skinner.

SERMON IX.

INCENTIVES TO EFFORT.

BY REV. SAMUEL P. SKINNER.

"For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope." — 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

The injunction, referred to in the text, was originally designed to secure humane treatment to the serviceable animal, which was the chief dependance of the Hebrews in their agricultural pursuits. The Apostle employs it, however, to illustrate the care of Providence. He was writing to the Christians at Corinth, who had relapsed into a state of inactivity, and had suspended the measures necessary for the support of the ministry among them,—apparently under the impression that their efforts were thrown away, or, that if the Gospel were really a divine truth, it ought

to support itself, and make its way in the world, without human co-operation. The Apostle thought differently, and wished to convince the Corinthians of their error. He believed that God is not indifferent to the welfare of his creatures; and that every well-meant labor of man would be blessed. Hence, he refers to this provision in the Law of Moses, securing humanity of treatment to the ox, and asks, "Does God take care for oxen?" That is to say, is He especially mindful of His inferior creation, and unconcerned in regard to man? And he continues, "For whose sake is this written? For ours, no doubt, that he who ploweth should plow in hope; and that he who thresheth in hope, should be partaker of his hope." As if he had said, "God takes care of the lowest order of created beings." Does He not also care for man? Is not this written that we might have hope in our labor, and expect a recompense for our toil?

The Apostle had probably in more immediate view, the support and encouragement due to ministers of the Gospel; but his language is not restricted to this application. It applies to any effort, by any persons, to sustain the cause of re-

ligious truth, and to give it energy and scope in society. He tells us, that in God's concern for the inferior creation, we have the strongest assurance that the interests of the superior are not left out of view, and that every work of goodness we attempt shall be prospered. The work may seem unpromising to us; it may appear that our labor has been undertaken in vain; yet, it is not so. God takes note of our efforts, and will ripen fruits from what we perform. He who is not forgetful of what is due to the patient labor of the ox, will not be forgetful to compensate the well-directed labors of man.

Such is the Apostle's use of the text. His argument is of the same character with that of the Saviour, when he refers to the beauty in which God has arrayed the lily, and the grass with which He has clothed the field, drawing from the reference the forcible appeal, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, will He not much more clothe you?" And another similar instance is, when he directs attention to the birds of the air, saying, "Not a sparrow shall fall to the ground without your Father;" and then

presents the emphatic inference, "Are ye not of more value than many sparrows?" It is an argument from the less to the greater — from God's known interest in inferior things, to the certainty of his care over the superior.

It is a magnificent truth, this which the Apostle asserts in the text; and, could we receive it so as to make it practically ours, it would give us heart and nerve in many a season of difficulty and doubt.

I. The great evil with us is, we expect to realize too soon the results of our labors. We cannot *wait* for the reward. We want it at once, measured out to us day by day, according to *our* estimate of our merits. When this cannot be, we become disheartened, and give over the effort. If a man engages in trade, he does so, with the expectation of making his fortune speedily. He has no disposition to be content with moderate gains — to submit to long years of frugal painstaking, before the sun-shine of wealth shall fairly dawn upon him. To his eager expectancy, the reward is near. Bright visions float before him, of an independence almost within his grasp. A

few bold and resolute movements, if they do not crown him with success, will put him in a position from which to command it. If these calculations fail him, as they are very likely to do, he loses heart. He feels that fortune is not worth the having, if it is to be won in littles, and only after many years of self-denial. And from the lofty views with which he commenced life, he sinks — sinks, perhaps, into the cheat, or, without any settled aim, wanders from one scheme to another, accomplishing nothing. Such are the men who are envious of the prosperity of others, and who are perpetually complaining of the inequalities of Providence. God, they think, in their case, at least, muzzles the ox that treadeth out the corn.

It is the same with the man who is ambitious of fame or power. Your politician, for example, commences his career with ever so many fine and fondly-cherished notions of human rights, of the people's sovereignty, of the public weal, and so on. But he must see his labors rapidly blossoming into substantial honors, or his great heart, so richly crowded with noble sentiments, becomes as empty as a tenement to let; and perhaps, in-

deed, offered to the occupancy of any principles that can give encouragement of paying the rental.

Now, if man were as unreasoning as the ox, — if he had but present, material needs to supply, and these being satisfied, he were concerned for nothing higher or beyond, then we might expect that, day by day, his full reward would be measured out to him. But God has not limited us, as He has the brute, to the narrow strip of time, which we call "to-day." He has given to our imagination the range of the past, and the hope of the future. We do not live merely in the present. We live, in part, in the lives of those who have gone before us, and in the future, not only in our own natural lives, but in those of generations yet to come. So that actions of to-day, though they may not mature and bear fruit to-morrow, may, perhaps, on the next day, or the next year, or the next generation. Or, which is still more probable, they may commence their development to-morrow, and go on steadily unfolding themselves in every day, and year, and generation, through all existence.

This is our prerogative above the ox. All of

his life is that which exists in the passing moment. Ours is spread over indefinite spaces and periods. His reward is measured to him in the satisfaction of the existing want. Ours is co-extensive with the range of our thought and hope. If we are content to work, waiting God's time for the recompense to be unfolded, whether it be to us, or to those around us, — whether to this age, or the next, — whether in this life, or the future, then we act up to the dignity of our nature. But if we are impatient of delay, — if we lose heart and courage, when the reward is not instant in the coming, we sink below our proper selves, and approach the level of the brute. We narrow the sphere of our being to the point of time which now is.

II. To resist this tendency to the merely material and sensual view of life, is the object of the Apostle in the text. He would not have us limit our desires to the passing moment, but that we should take in the whole field of human activity and interest, which stretches out before us into the future. He would have us, — not like the ox, — but learn a lesson from God's care of the

ox; — would have us know, that if God regards the brute in his insignificance, and requites him according to his limited and subordinate sphere of toil, He will much more regard us, and make our labors fruitful of appropriate results, according to the higher and broader sphere in which we act. So we should labor on, in confidence, — nothing doubting. Let it be, that we cannot see the recompense rapidly developing itself. Let it be, that we cannot see it *at all*, or have any possible conception of how it is to come, — yet it will come; if not soon, at some period; if not to us, to others; if not in this life, in the next. This should be sufficient, simply to know, that no good act can ultimately fail of producing its appropriate fruit.

If none, who have lived before us, had acted from this high and holy motive, we, of this generation, should be in a sad state of barbaric ignorance, and brutal degradation. If the martyrs to religion, and the martyrs to learning and liberty, had refused to shed their blood for the support of principle, preferring personal ease or gain, to the slow unfolding of their actions, in after ages, where now would be the privileges,

which their fidelity has secured to us, and the love of the right and true, which their heroism has kindled in the breasts of men, in every intervening period? God be praised for the martyrs! — for the men who could be just, not knowing when, or how, but trusting that *somehow*, their integrity would unfold itself in blessings to mankind!

And not for the martyrs only, — for Leonidas and Tell, for Stephen and Wickliffe, for Socrates and Virgilius,—not for these only ought we to be thankful, but for all wise and pure minds in the past, which are as fountains, from which we drink, and are refreshed. Who can estimate how much of what we are, is owing to the fidelity and excellence of men, who have lived before us? — to the heroism of Luther, to the wisdom of Newton, to the patriotism of Washington? Not in their own persons, nor in their own age, were all the rich rewards of their virtues realised and exhausted. They were benefactors to every subsequent age, and remotest nations and races will gather in fruits, which have grown from seeds of their planting. So of every

true thought and just deed. Its influence reaches through all time, nor is it lost in eternity.

III. It is not, however, in great affairs, or on great occasions, alone, that this view of duty is important; but also in the ordinary actions of common life. Nothing is so trivial, that it needs not to be done with good intent; and no good intent is so inconsiderable, as to be without an influence.

It is said by philosophers, that if an atom of matter should be struck from existence, it would produce instant confusion in the system of the universe, so nicely adjusted to each other are the separate forces of nature. God's government of the moral world is not less exact. Every action of the human will has a bearing, remote, as well as immediate, — reaching forward through all the intricacies of human being, as the atom holds an influence in the system of nature. No good and true thing, however small, can be lost. Christianity, at the first, was but a trifle, — a grain of mustard-seed, cast into the soil, and behold the results, which are even now developing themselves, eighteen centuries from that period! Seventy years ago, a solitary and unknown voice

asserted, on this Continent, the truth of Universalism, and the sentiment is overturning the theology of centuries! We cannot estimate the results of actions, trivial of themselves, in their ever-widening and progressive development. A kind word, a cheerful countenance, a cordial greeting, a gift of charity, — civilities not thought of, as reaching beyond the moment, — have, in thousands of instances, given a new turn to the fortunes of individuals, and through them distributed, unnumbered blessings to mankind.

God forbids that the ox, which treadeth out the corn, should be defrauded of his recompense; much less will he permit any human virtue to go unrewarded. For our sakes is this written, that he who labors, should labor in hope. That is the sentiment which should govern us. We need it always. There are periods with us all, no doubt, when we become exhausted with the cares of life, — when our best calculations are defeated, and our best efforts seem empty of results. We grow sick at heart, and know not how to go on. We would fain give over the contest, and *should* relinquish it, in a thousand cases, where we do not, if God had not made this sentiment of trust an instinct, as well as a moral

principle. It is this alone that saves; and the more strongly we are fortified with it, as a habit of the mind, the more bravely can we bear up against adversity.

We need it, also, not only to give courage and strength to our endeavors, but to preserve the moral tone of our minds. There are sometimes occasions when we hesitate in the choice of motives, — instances, in which the wrong presents such attractions, and the right looks so repulsive, that we halt in temporary doubt. In such moments of indecision, we need the influence of this sentiment, to assure us that no wrong can permanently prosper; that the true and just, however unpromising in appearance, will inevitably have the victory.

We need it, also, in our homes, to keep the affections bright and glowing; to restrain unkindness of thought, and harshness of expression; to take away all moroseness and selfishness, and to dispose us to benignity of spirit, and gentleness of manners. Nothing can surround the home circle with such an atmosphere of sweetness and peace, as the habitual consciousness, that even the slightest act of propriety is not without a beneficent influence.

We need it, moreover, when we go out into the world, whether in the pursuits of business, or of pleasure, our social relations, or civil responsibilities. We need it, then, that the authority of our example, the influence of our speech, the character of our minds, as reflected in our deportment, may be all on the side of truth and virtue, — knowing that no single trait of a noble and generous nature which we may exhibit, can fail of its appropriate results.

But we need this sentiment of trust, not only as a persuasive to personal holiness, but also in our associated capacity, as members of a religious sect. We need it to keep us from despondency, when we compare ourselves with the rich and influential sects around us; need it to give resoluteness and vigor to our efforts, which are too often put forth with feebleness and reluctance; need it to bring us into God's sanctuary on each returning Sabbath, with hearts warm with love and zeal, to gather new warmth, by unfeigned and grateful homage to the Father, and affectionate communion with His children.

With this sentiment, that God does infallibly protect and prosper the right, wrought into the texture of our souls, and existing and acting with

that intensity and force, which its importance demands, our denomination, small as it is in comparison with others, would be as a city set on a hill, whose magnificence could be seen from afar, and whose foundations would endure throughout the ages, — a city of wisdom and light, sending out, through all time, divine and noble influences, for the regeneration of the world. Let us yield to the sentiment of the text, and confide in God, that He will infallibly protect and prosper the right. AMEN.

Engraved by A.B.Walter Philada.

George W. Montgomery.

SERMON X.

SHALL I SMITE?

BY REV. GEORGE W. MONTGOMERY.

"And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, my father, shall I smite them? — shall I smite them?" —2 KINGS vi. 21.

THESE words are connected with a portion of ancient history, that presents features of extraordinary interest, and affords a lesson replete with delightful instruction. It will, therefore, be useful to trace its noble incidents, and observe carefully its important results.

It appears that war was raging between Israel and Syria. In the prosecution of this war, the Syrian king devised various schemes to destroy his foes by surprise. But no sooner were his plans formed, than they were communicated to Jehoram, the King of Israel, who thereby es-

caped destruction. The King of Syria became angry, because his intentions were thus frustrated. Suspecting treachery, he inquired of his servants, who among them had aided the cause of his enemy. One of them answered, "None, my Lord, O King! but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the King of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bed-chamber. (verse 12.)

His next place was to remove Elisha out of his way. Having ascertained that the prophet was in Dotham, the King of Syria sent there a strong force, which availed itself of the darkness of the night, to surround the city. In the morning, when the servant of the prophet went forth, and beheld the array of the enemy, he was filled with fear, and said, "Alas, my master, how shall we do?" (verse 15.) The answer was, "Fear not; for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them." (verse 16.) The servant soon became satisfied of this fact, because, in accordance with the prayer of the prophet, his spiritual eyes were opened, and he saw, as it were, a mountain full of horses, and chariots of fire, representing the invisible forces of God, which held Elisha in their protection.

The man of God then prayed, that the Syrian host might be smitten with blindness. It was done. Elisha then went to them, and without their knowing him, led them into Samaria, under the delusion, that they would there find the man whom they sought. On arriving in the city, their sight was restored to them. They at once discovered their helplessness, surrounded, as they were, by an irresistible force. On seeing his enemies, they who had stood in array against his dominions, so completely in his power, the King of Israel said to the prophet, "*My Father, shall I smite them? — shall I smite them?*" How perfectly this repeated question harmonizes with the violent passions excited by war-furies! How exactly it coincides with the voices that speak from the iron lips of force and revenge! These Syrians were the enemies of Israel. They were now completely in the king's power. His troops were at hand, and, by his order, they would at once slaughter the helpless Syrians, who could then give him no more trouble. In what manner could he more readily relieve himself of their fierce enmity? It is true, that it would be a work of cruelty: that it would make Syria trem-

ble with the wail of anguish, which would burst from the hearts of its widows and orphans; that out of the blood thus shed, fiercer, and more unrelenting foes, might arise, to exact from him a terrible retribution for his revenge. But yet, these Syrians were in his power, and why not smite them?

What answer gave the prophet to the king's repeated question? It is a remarkable answer, worthy of profound regard, and comes to us from that old time, sweeping through the terrible tempests of human passions, like an angelic song, becoming the "still, small voice" of God amid the storm, the fire, and the earthquake. Turning to the king, he said, "Thou shalt not smite them. Would'st thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword, and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." (verse 22.) This must have been a new mode to the warrior-king, of treating his enemies. Did the worldly wisdom, of which we hear so much in our day, suggest the idea to him, that if, instead of crushing his foes, he should obey the prophet, and treat them kindly, they would lose all the good

feelings that lingered in their hearts, and, as soon as away from his presence, would resume their weapons with ten-fold hatred and malignity? If this idea did occur to him, he did not obey it. He preferred to follow the command of the prophet, in whose mind the lamp of inspiration was steadily burning, and who communed with the invisible forces of love and truth, and, therefore, must have, at least, a portion of the heavenly wisdom. What he did, and the result thereof, the historian has stated: "And he prepared great provision for them. And when they had eaten and drank, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel. (verse 23.)

This was the answer which Elisha gave to the question, "*Shall I smite them?*" This was the conduct of the king, disarmed of his war-spirit. And this was the result, — falsifying the foolish thought, that the full gushing of mercy's spring, will do in the heart, just what an intolerable tyranny will, and excite malignant passion into furious activity. It was a new way to kill enemies. These Syrians were still living men; yet

they lived, not as foes, but as friends. So far as they were concerned, Israel was better protected, than by armed soldiers. "*For the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.*" Truly, the Apostle seemed but echoing this great fact, when he said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." (Romans xii. 20.) The warrior-king did both. And as the stubborn head of iron first softens, and then melts in the furnace fire, so he subdued their stiff hearts, by unexpected kindness. A strange scene, indeed, for a soldier-king, in the midst of armed followers, trained to blood, trying the gentler weapon of generosity, and finding it more potent and irresistible. than spear and sword. And we know not what thoughts must have agitated his soul, as he saw the Syrian host departing in full security, to no more trouble his kingdom with the strife of blood and pillage. As for the prophet, he knew that it was one of the triumphs of God. It must have appeared to him like a brilliant ray of light, preceding the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, with the balm of healing in his wings.

This is the account which has been given of an event, that transpired in so ancient an age. With a living reality, two facts start out of this account, and travel down through successive centuries to our times, for illustration and application. The first is, that question of terrible import, "*Shall I smite them?*" The second is the answer of the prophet, "*Set bread and water before them.*" These represent two great ideas, which are embodied in this world, and are, therefore, tangible. The one is the voice of the spirit, which stirs up the passions into malignity and hatred — the spirit which so much pervades the cruel theologies of the past and the present, seeking to chill the serene air of heaven with an endless blast of its blighting breath. The other is in harmony with Christianity, and unfolds its nature and tendency. It is a true sign of its saving character, of the heavenly emotions with which it exercises the soul, and of the noble kindness of those emotions, as they show themselves in the outward life. For the Gospel, in its doctrine, its precepts, its aims, its results, never uses the language of revenge, nor acts in accordance with it. Its heart, on the contrary, beats with the heart of

the prophet, "Set bread and water before them." Hence, the Saviour said, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me, shall never hunger." (John vi. 35.) "For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. (verse 33.) Hence, too, the Revelator said, in the voice of inspiration, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. 1.) Jesus, the Divine Teacher, is symbolized by *bread,* prepared in heaven, fitted to give health and strength to the soul, by the vital forces of faith and love. The truth he taught, is symbolized by a stream of water of life, having its origin with God and the Lamb, — water, not poisoned by drainings from the cesspools of cruel dogmas and perverted passions, but clear as crystal, sweet and refreshing, and free as air, even to him who cometh from the burning desert of sin, where neither cool springs nor ripe fruits are.

From these thoughts, it is evident, that the spirit of the ancient event, with which the text has its connection, still exists, and runs in deep and rapid currents through the heaving sea of

life. Bring back to reality that event. See the warrior-king, with the sword glittering in his hand, his countenance, gloomy with dark passion, lowering upon the trembling Syrian host, with his bands ready to fall upon them. Hear the words hissing from his lips, "Shall I smite them?" At his side, stands the prophet, unarmed, and without passion. Gentle in appearance, yet mighty in the strength of his God; with features all serene, a ray of sunlight, like a smile of love, playing upon his ample brow; he speaks in words as effectual in the tempest of passion, as were those of the Saviour in the storm, which raged on the lake of Galilee. "Thou shalt not smite them. Wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword, and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." Now, let any person reflect thoroughly upon what he has read of man's past history, and upon what he has seen transpiring in the world, and in many of the scenes which come vividly before him, he will discover the dim shapes of the warrior-king, and the God-like prophet, coming out with bolder

and still bolder relief, in events which manifest the same forms of spirit that existed in their souls. And perhaps, in the facts which rise most prominently on the broad landscape of human life, he may find the warrior-king more frequently repeated than the form of Elisha. For that king is a true representative of all those who dream that cruelty is a characteristic of the ever-blessed Father; of all those who reign in despotism; of all those who govern by brute force, whether in families or elsewhere; of all those who follow the dictates of passions, in word or deed, in the intercourse of life. The language of each, virtually is, "*I smite.*" On the contrary, Elisha appears again in all those who overcome evil with good; who suppress bitter words, and speak gently; and who labor to lessen the sum of human ill, and increase the sum of human happiness. The true children of Christianity, the spirit of their language is, *give* "*bread and water.*"

Shall we study a few instances of this character? It will be profitable to do so. For the more frequent our communion with beneficent and virtuous scenes, in contrast with the repul-

siveness of the revengeful and the wicked, the more surely will our souls harmonize with the teachings and tendencies of the Gospel of peace.

On a certain occasion, the Son of Man started for the city of Jerusalem, having sent messengers before him, to prepare places of rest. The inhabitants of one village, being Samaritans, refused to receive the Saviour, because he was going to Jerusalem. The reason for this unkindness, is the same as *that* which has frozen up the warm sympathies of thousands since. There was a bitter enmity existing between the Samaritans and Jews, which was as effectual in separating them from all communion, as would an ocean, had it rolled its waters between them. But how felt the disciples, at this contemptuous rejection of their Lord? In their indignation, they said to him, "Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" (Luke ix. 54.) See how the warrior-king, with his smiting sword, again starts into being. Did the Saviour possess the spirit of the king, or of the prophet? "But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye

are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. *And they went to another village.*" (Luke ix. 55, 56.) The prophet appears again — yea, more than the prophet; even the Son of God himself, who, departing so widely from the world's spirit, did humbly, to still the storm of bitterness and prejudice, pass to another village. What a simple expedient! yet how frequently we lose sight of it.

In the history of Jesus, another event connects itself with our subject, — an event, which, in one view, is a terrible evil, but which, in another view, takes a prominent part in the salvation of the world. In the midst of infuriated foes, whose hearts were cold with scoffing ridicule, and fierce with rage, Jesus was nailed to the cross, and was raised up to die. Did the spirit of the warrior-king reign in his soul? Did he call the legions of angels, which, on a certain occasion, he told his disciples he could command, and bid them smite the crowd of enemies? Or was there more than the prophet's kindness, even the love which embraced the whole race? From his opening lips, gently and sweetly fell the words, "*Father,*

forgive." The Pagan centurion heard them, and he responded, "Truly, this was the Son of God." All true hearts feel and reverence them. "Father, forgive." Angels listened to that prayer with the same joy in which they sung the song of "peace on earth, and good will towards men." The Father heard it, and confirmed his approval of mercy, by inspiring the Apostle to say, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. v. 13.) What a noble lesson is this to the world! and yet how often it is unheeded!

But the warrior-king and the prophet will appear yet again before us. In some of the theologies of the day, it is affirmed, that a particular period will arrive, when the whole race will be gathered before the throne of God for final doom; that in the presence of the Saviour, untold millions of that race will stand more helpless, more dispirited and trembling, than were the captive Syrians of old; that the Saviour will virtually inquire of the dread Judge, "My Father, shall I smite them?" and that when the word shall be given, he, without one word of sympathy, or hope, or mercy, will crush them into endless ruin,

and ever-growing agonies. And so these old theologies not only re-embody the ancient warrior's spirit in the future world, but fill his heart with infinite cruelty. Is this so? Look, and you will see more than the prophet's form of love. Who was it, that did so much for the lame, the sick, the dumb, the deaf, the blind? Who was the person, that so graciously taught "the common people?" Who was he, that, with such tenderness, met the widow coming from the gates of Nain with the dead body of her only son, and, by the magic power of miracle, restored *him* to life, and *her*, to joy again? Who was he, that wept over Jerusalem, and while on the cross, prayed for his foes? Who was he, that said he was the good Shepherd to find the straying sheep, and the good Physician to heal the sick? Who declared, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me?" Why, he was the Saviour, the Son of God, full of divine sympathies, ever ready to place the bread and water of truth before his enemies, that they might return unto God. And, in the other world, will these sympathies be driven from his soul? Then give good heed to the answer con-

tained in the Apostle's words, — "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." (Heb. xiii. 8.) I verily believe that Paul was right. And as Jesus will always retain his living love, he will never ask the question, "*My Father, shall I smite them?*" nor any question equivalent to it. He will be ready to give them the bread and water of truth and righteousness. How know we this? Listen! "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. xv. 24—28.) This luminous passage sweeps away those ideas which had their birth in times, when "*to smite*" was the prevailing force. It leaves us to believe, that the spirit

which Jesus embodied in the father of the wandering prodigal, is a noble ray of love from the God of all grace and mercy, whose benignant government is paternal, is disciplinary in its punishment, wise in its reward, and endless in its gifts. It permits us to look upon Jesus as the Saviour; as always successfully laboring to redeem, anywhere and everywhere, so long as sin and suffering shall continue to exist; and as one, whose mission will not be accomplished, until every source of evil shall be eradicated from the world of mind.

Thus we discover, that Christianity has no representative in the warrior-king with his words of smitings, and that it is rightly symbolized by the prophet with his merciful spirit; only, the little spring which lived in the prophet's heart in the Saviour and Christianity, has become a vast and deep sea, whose waters refresh the world. The nature of the Gospel, the character of its doctrine, the present and future aims and purposes which it is designed to accomplish, the admirable power and purifying tendencies of its moral precepts, show conclusively, that it is the direct antagonist of the mere brute force power

of all wickedness, of all error, and that it is struggling to redeem the race, by saving man from these enemies. Therefore, Christianity has not taken full possession of a nation, a community, a family, a society, an individual, until it has subdued and disarmed the warrior-kings of unruly passions in their souls, and made them servants to enlightened intellect, and earnest affection and virtue, in the work of holiness and love. And just in proportion as they get away from these evils, and put on the spirit of the Saviour, so do they approach the Christian idea of right and happiness, and grow in that love, which is the noblest of the divine graces.

Engraved By A.B.Walter Philada.

Wm. F. Whittemore

SERMON XI.

THE EXCELLENCE OF CHARITY.

BY REV. THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." — 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

At the time of the writing of this epistle, there were serious divisions in the church at Corinth. God had given different gifts to different members of the church, (1 Cor. xii. 4–11.) These were important to all. No one, on account of the gift which he possessed, could despise another. The church was, like the human body, composed of many members. "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you," (verse 21.) Thus the apostle sought to make the different members of the church feel their dependence upon each other. He exhorted them to "covet

earnestly the best gifts; and yet, (said he,) I show unto you a more excellent way" (verse 31.) That more excellent way he describes in the next chapter, namely, that from which the text is taken. It was the way of charity,—the cultivation and practice of that Christian grace.

If we look carefully at the chapter in which we find the text, we shall see that it may be naturally divided into three sections. In the first section, Paul speaks of the *indispensableness* of charity.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing."

Thus, we see, that in Paul's view, if a man had every other gift, and had not charity, he was poor indeed; but if he had charity, even if he

had nothing else, he was rich in the sight of God.

In the second section of the chapter, Paul describes charity, shows its characteristics and operations.

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

How amiable is charity as here described! How much needed is that grace on the earth! How much like Paradise would be this lower world, if every part was filled with charity!

In the third section of the chapter, Paul speaks of the endless duration of charity. Everything else may fail, but charity will abide.

"Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that

which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

The main object of this discourse will be to show the excellence of charity. But in the prosecution of our design, we shall speak also of faith and hope. We shall consider the subjects in the order in which they are arranged by the apostle, and describe

1st, Faith.

2d, Hope.

3d, Charity.

4th, Show why charity is greater than faith and hope.

Faith is that operation of the mind which we generally call belief. It is to be regretted that theological terms are not usually understood. If your neighbor makes a statement to you, and

you believe it, *that* is faith. It is the same faculty of mind by which we believe earthly things, with which we also believe heavenly things; just as it is the same eye by which we look upon terrestrial objects, with which we also survey the heavenly bodies. Christian faith is belief, — a belief of the great truths of Christianity. To the Christian, it makes no difference, as it respects his faith, what God has said. However improbable it may appear, when we look at the attributes of man, yet if the Christian knows that God has said it, he believes without a doubt. Much is said in the Scriptures in regard to Abraham's faith. It is everywhere spoken of with approbation. "Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 3.) The striking feature of Abraham's faith was its strength. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able, also, to perform." (Rom. iv. 20, 21.) It was promised to the patriarch, that in him and his posterity, all nations, kindreds, and families of the earth should be blessed. He had become an old man, and

still no child had been born, through whom the promise could be fulfilled. Against all probability, he still continued to trust the Word of God; he "against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations." (Rom. iv. 18.) At last, the promise is fulfilled in the birth of Isaac. How must the patriarch's bosom have swelled with fond delight. But, in the midst of his exultation, strange to say, he received a command from God, to take the son, the only son, whom he loved, and offer him for a burnt offering. He immediately prepared to obey the divine command. No murmur, no objection, escaped his lips. He did not say, "Lord, if the child be slain, how shall the divine promise be fulfilled?" He believed that God would take care of his own word, even though the promised seed should die. He took the lad to the place; he built the altar; he laid the wood thereon; he bound the child, and laid him on the altar upon the wood; and already had he taken the knife, and stretched forth his hand, when the angel of the Lord interposed, and said, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest

God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." This was a trial of faith, indeed. God saw fit to try the strength of Abraham's faith in this matter, not that God did not know how strong it was; but it was done, that mankind, in every subsequent age, might have an example of faith in the promises of God, which remained strong against every discouragement. Such, then, is Christian faith, — faith in God's promises, strong and unwavering.

2d. Hope. What is hope? Some persons do not see the need of hope. They think faith is sufficient. Faith saves men, they say. "He that believeth shall be saved;" and this is all that is necessary, they tell us. But of one thing I think we may feel confident, viz.: that the sacred writers would not have spoken as they have, in regard to Christian hope, if it were not of vast value and importance to men. They ascribe to it great purifying power. Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he (Christ) is pure." (1 John iii. 3.) We see, then, that hope is very important. The hope of glory will prepare us for glory; the hope of purity will make us pure. O! if we can contemplate the

future world as it is, the very contemplation will serve, in some measure, to fit us for it! Dr. Doddridge describes the future world, in the following beautiful strain:

"No more fatigue, no more distress,
Nor sin, nor death, shall reach the place,
No groans shall mingle with the songs,
That warble from immortal tongues.

No rude alarms, no raging foes,
To interrupt the long repose,
No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
To veil the bright, eternal noon."

A lively, vivid hope, possessing a man's heart, that he is destined to a world like that, must tend to fit him for it.

Hope is essential to the Christian, and indeed to all men. The Jews were required "to set their hope in God." (Ps. lxxviii. 7.) "Happy is he whose hope is in the Lord his God." (Ps. cxlvi. 5.) "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. xv. 19.) The Christian is required to "lay hold of the hope set before him." (Heb. vi. 18.) He is exhorted not to be "moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Col. i. 23.) It is the "hope of glory," (27,) of which he is to have the "full assurance unto the end." (Heb. vi. 11;) he is to

"lay hold upon it," and it shall prove "an anchor to his soul." Heb. vi. 18, 19. How then can we doubt that hope is necessary and essential to man? If I may be indulged in the use of a metaphor, I will describe *hope* as a sentinel, which God has placed to guard the faith of man and keep it pure. It keeps careful watch, and as long as your faith shall remain pure, it will abide quietly in your breast. But when your faith becomes corrupt, hope is disturbed; it gives the alarm; it admonishes you faithfully; and it does not leave you until the corrupt faith becomes triumphant, and then hope is gone. Hope cannot dwell in the same breast with a faith essentially corrupt. The true faith abides with hope, and hope glows and brightens in its presence. They dwell together. "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three." They all abide together; they all dwell in the same human breast, if the faith cherished be the true faith. But if the faith become essentially impure, hope, after repeated warnings, will leave you, and you will fall into that unhappy class, whom Paul described as being "without hope and without God in the world," Eph. ii. 12. When you

mourn, you will mourn as those "who have no hope." 1 Thess. iv. 13.

In the true Christian faith, there is nothing that the believer may not hope for. He may pray, "thy will, O God, be done." In his belief, when he considers the end God has in view, all is right — there is nothing to give pain to his soul. Hope and faith abide together. But how much faith is there in the world, — yea, even in the professedly Christian church, — which no one, not even the person who cherishes it, can hope for. St. Paul has a remarkable expression in one of his epistles, which it seems must throw some light on the deeply interesting subject before us. He says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for." Heb. xi. 1. Whose faith did he refer to? He undoubtedly referred to the faith which he himself cherished — the Christian faith; and consequently we say, the Christian faith is the substance of what the believer can hope for. But let us be careful here. By the Christian faith, we do not mean anything and everything which passes under that name; there is much corrupt doctrine which is known by the name of Christian doctrine, and is even called *evangelical doctrine*. We mean, by the term

faith, as employed by the apostle, pure Christian faith, without any admixture of error. It is the substance of things *hoped for.* Look, for instance, at the doctrine of endless misery, a doctrine which is professed by thousands in the Christian church. If you say to a brother Christian who professes that doctrine, "do you really believe in the doctrine of endless misery?" He replies in the affirmative. You inquire again, "do you really *hope* that *that* doctrine is true?" He starts back from you with astonishment. "Hope for it! (he says) do you think I am a devil?" He does *not* hope for it. His faith, unlike that of the Apostles, is the substance of things *not* hoped for. He believes in one thing and hopes for another. But the true Christian faith, in its total purity, embraces nothing which the pious and benevolent soul may not hope for. So much concerning hope: let us now turn to charity.

3d. Charity. Our description of charity shall be brief. It is sometimes supposed that charity is mere alms-giving. This is a restricted sense of the word. Charity, of course, embraces alms-giving; but alms-giving is, by no means, the whole of charity. Charity is benevolence — it is

love. In the New Testament, the word occurs only in the Epistles, and once in the Apocalypse; and in all these cases, it is a translation of the Greek word, which, in other places, is translated love. We are to understand charity, therefore, in the New Testament use of the word, as synonymous with love. When St. John says, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him," 1 John iv. 16, he refers to the same principle, called by St. Paul, charity; and we might say, "God is charity, and he that dwelleth in charity, dwelleth in God, and God in him;" or the text might be translated, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

4th. We now come to the last, and the principal point in the discourse, viz., to show certain reasons why charity is to be regarded as greater than faith or hope. "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." We understand, by the declaration of the Apostle, that, in certain senses, charity is more important, more necessary; and that though a man may abound in hope, and may have all faith, so that he could even remove mountains, yet without charity, he would be nothing. There

are several reasons why charity should be regarded as greater than faith and hope.

First. It is greater, because it is the only Christian grace which completely fulfils the divine commandments. Neither faith, nor hope, — great, good, and glorious, as they are, — can fulfil the divine command without love. Paul said to Timothy, "Now, the end of the commandment is charity." 1 Tim. i. 5. This is that grace at which the commandment aims, and without which, it cannot be fulfilled. Charity, or love, is the *fufilling of the law.* No truth is stated more clearly in the New Testament than this. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore, love is the *fulfilling* of the law." Rom. xiii. 10. Neither faith, or hope, is said to be the fulfilling of the law. "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (verse 8.) So important is Christian love; so true is it, if a man lives in the full and constant exercise of this great and good principle, that he will violate no part of God's commands, that Paul uses the following language: "Thou shalt not commit adultery; Thou shalt not kill: Thou shalt not steal; Thou shalt not bear false witness; Thou shalt not covet; and if

there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (verse 9.) So completely is the whole law fulfilled by the exercise of love.

Let us turn for one moment to the two great commandments of the law. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." Matt. xxii, 36-39. What is the fulfilling of this commandment? Love. The second commandment is like unto it: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The first commandment respects our duty to God, and the second respects our duty to man; and the second is like unto the first, because it is fulfilled by the exercise of love. Love, then, is the fulfilling of the divine command, and consequently is greater than faith or hope. It always seemed to me, that the parable of the good Samaritan was intended to show that mere profession of faith and hope, without love, did not qualify a man to gain the approbation of the Saviour. We know not that the events on which that parable was founded ever

took place; perhaps the pure fancy of our Lord supplied the picture on the moment. A lawyer, whose attention had been turned by our Lord to the importance of the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," fearing, perhaps, that he might be suspected of having disobeyed this excellent injunction, asked the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It was to enlighten the lawyer on this point, that the parable was spoken. A certain Jew was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and on his journey, he fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and left him to die at the road-side. Who shall come to his help? Who shall staunch his bleeding wounds? Who shall bear him to a place of rest? The first traveller who passes is a Jewish priest, most fortunately, we should think, at the first sight. Surely the priest will help this poor bleeding fellow-countryman. But, no! The account assures us, that "by chance there came down a certain priest that way." He did not choose the road because the poor wounded man was there, and because he desired to afford him relief; it was altogether a matter of chance, that he came

to the spot. He sees the wounded man, and perhaps he hears his moans. It may be, that the sufferer puts forth a cry for assistance; but the priest turns and passes by him upon the other side; and so far as he knows, leaves him there to die. The next traveller who comes is a Levite; and if not a priest, he is certainly one of that tribe from whom all the priests are taken. Does he offer assistance to the dying Jew? No; but, like his predecessor, he turns away, and leaves the poor man to his fate. Oh! who shall help him? Deserted by two of his own countrymen, what may he expect from strangers? Must not his heart sink within him, when he sees himself so neglected? But behold, a third traveller comes. He is not a Jew, alas! but a stranger,—a Samaritan, with whom the Jews will have no dealings. Can any act of kindness be expected from him? Ah! he catches sight of the fainting creature. *He has compassion on him.* He approaches him. He first essays to bind up his wounds, that the ebbing current may be stayed. He applies the best remedies he has about him; and having, in this way, prepared him for removal, he lifts him upon his own beast,

and conducts him to an inn, and takes care of him through the day and night; and when upon the next day he is obliged to leave him, he gives the landlord a sacred charge—"take care of him;" and assures him of a full compensation for all his troubles. When Jesus had thus stated the parable, he said to the lawyer, who had given occasion for it, "Who was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?" and drew from him the following answer, "He that showed mercy on him." But this was not a man of the same nation, or of the same religion; he was a heretic in the sight of the Jews. Still, he was a better man than the Priest or the Levite. They may have had faith, or hope; but he had charity. He fulfilled the divine command, by loving his neighbor as he loved himself. Who does not see, that his act is worthy to be commended to the attention of all men; while that of the Priest and Levite only induces our disgust. How true is it, that charity is greater than faith or hope.

Second. Charity is greater than faith or hope, because it is a divine, a god-like excellence. By having charity, we become *like God.* Now, faith

and hope do not make us to resemble God. God has no faith, in the sense in which the word is used in the text. Neither can he be said to have hope. We are aware that in the New Testament we find mention made of "the faith of God;" but his promise, his *faithfulness* is thereby intended. He is also called "the God of hope." It is not, however, because he exercises hope, as frail and imperfect man does; but because he is the source of hope to his creatures. We call the sun the orb of light, not because he is shined upon, but because he is the source of light to the whole solar system. "Faith" and "Hope" are the attributes of imperfect beings. A God, like our God, who knows all things from the beginning, cannot have faith, in the sense in which his creatures cherish it. Faith and hope belong to a being, who cannot penetrate the future, and who is obliged to put trust in what some wiser being has declared to him. It is clear, then, that neither faith, nor hope, will make a man resemble God. Not so charity. Charity makes us like God; or, to put the syllables in the usual order, God-like. God is love, charity; and he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God,

and God in him." 1 John iv. 16. The sacred writers call upon us to cultivate those moral qualities, which will cause us to resemble God. He, the Omnipotent, the Holy One, calls on us to imitate him; and it certainly is not impossible to obey the command, for God gives no commands to man, which man cannot obey. Hear the word of the Lord by Moses: "Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy." Lev. xix. 2. Our obligation to be holy, arises from the fact, that God commands it; and God commands it, because HE is holy, and because He desires his moral creatures to become more and more like Himself. Our blessed Lord, in his Sermon on the Mount, called on men to be "perfect, even as their Father in Heaven is perfect." Matt. v. 48. The moral perfection of God consists in impartial, unchangeable goodness, as any person will see, who will examine carefully, Matthew v. 43–48, and Luke vi. 35, 36. God loves his enemies, blesses those who curse Him, does good to those that hate Him, Matt. v. 44, and to use the words of Luke, "He is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil," Luke vi.

35. Because He is good in this manner, He requires us to be good in the same manner. "He maketh his sun to rise on the *evil*, and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just, and on the *unjust*." Matt. v. 45. Jesus rebuked men, who felt merely a partial love. The morality of such, in his sight, was low; it conformed to the meanest standards. "If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" He desired to elevate them above a charity so selfish and partial. He bade them love all men; and to encourage them in so doing, he referred to the impartial love of God, and urged them to be "perfect, as their Father in Heaven is perfect." The same sublime morality, inculcated by Moses and Jesus, was enforced by all the prophets and apostles: "Be ye followers of God, as dear children," said Paul, "and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us." Eph. v. 1, 2. Although we allow the vast importance of faith and hope, yet of how much greater importance is charity! It is only by filling human hearts with charity, that God can be made to dwell with men on the earth. In this way, He becomes their God, and they become His people.

How true is it, then, that charity is the greatest gift which God can bestow on man: "And now, (in this imperfect state) abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity."

Third. Charity is more important than faith, or hope, in the same sense in which the fruit is more important than the tree upon which it grows. The man who plants an orchard, has a purpose in view; he desires a harvest of fruit. It is not mere trees that he desires to raise. A tree, in the orchard, that bears no fruit, is nothing worth. The orchardist will use his best power to encourage the tree to be fruitful; but if his efforts are in vain, he applies the axe to the root, and puts a tree in its place, that will not disappoint his hope. "A certain man had a fig-tree, planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Thus, he said unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold these three years I came seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii. 6, 7. This parable of our Lord was founded on common sense. If a tree, of which fruit is expected, will not bear

fruit, it should be destroyed, and another should be put in its place.

Now, faith is like a tree. True faith is a living principle that bears fruit. It is like a grain of mustard-seed; it has a principle of growth. (Matt. xvii. 20.) It produces good fruit, if it be a proper faith. It *works by love.* Gal. v. 6. It produces love, purity, sanctification, salvation, in the human heart. Paul was sent to the Gentiles, that they might "receive an inheritance among them which are *sanctified through faith* that is in Christ." Acts xxvi. 18. By the power of faith Christ lives in us. "I am crucified with Christ," said Paul, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live *by the faith of the Son of God*, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Gal. ii. 20. Again, "By grace are we saved, *through faith;* and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph. ii. 8 Paul wished to have, not a mere dull, cold morality, but "a righteousness, which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 9. Through faith, the Scriptures will make us wise unto salvation. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Th

true end of our faith is the salvation of our souls," 1 Peter i. 9; and hence we are to "add to faith, virtue, and to virtue, knowledge, and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, godliness, and to godliness, brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness, charity. For if *these* things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall be neither *barren* nor *unfruitful*, in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter i. 5–8. We see, then, that the sacred writers keep up the idea of faith as a living principle, that, if nourished, will increase more and more, in the human soul, and bear fruit. There are a class of Christians, who hear the word, and understand and receive it, and in them "it beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty." Matt. xiii. 22. Charity, or love, is the fruit of faith. "We are (said Paul) bound to thank God always, for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the *charity* of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth." 2 Thess. i. 3.

True faith, then, is the living principle, and

charity is the fruit. Is not the fruit of more importance than the mere tree? "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James ii. 17. If a tree bear no fruit, it is worthless, it is as dead. The fruit which true faith will bear in our hearts, is well described by the Apostle: "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Gal. v. 22, 23. This is the fruit; and what kind of a faith must we have to bear this fruit? What kind of seed shall we plant to bring forth the *fruit* of love? It must be the seed of love. Every seed produces its own kind. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles." If love is needful to abound in the human heart, it must be produced by shedding abroad the love of God there. Some preach wrath and vengeance as existing in God, and hope, by sowing such a kind of seed, to reap a harvest of love. But "whatsoever a man soweth, that, also, shall he reap." Those who sow wrath shall reap wrath. An aged minister, who had long preached Calvinism, said, on a certain occasion, to his people, that he

had preached to them nearly fifty years, and it seemed to him they had grown worse and worse. What other consequences could he have expected from such a doctrine? It was time for him to change his treatment. If a physician had been in the habit of administering a certain medicine for fifty years, and everybody to whom he had given it had died, we should think him a very dull scholar in the school of experience, if he had not learned to try some other remedy. If we desire to produce love in the human soul, it must be done by shedding abroad the love of God. Dr. Watts has beautifully said:

> "Come, holy spirit, heavenly dove,
> With all thy quickening powers:
> Kindle a flame of sacred love,
> In these cold hearts of ours."

Cold hearts, indeed! Where shall we get a spark with which to kindle the flame? When we go to the hearth, in the morning, and find everything cold, — not a coal, not a spark, — what do we do? We cannot kindle, without a borrowed flame. We may have an abundance of ignitible material; but if we have not a spark, how shall we begin? How shall we kindle a

fire of love in the sinner's heart? Ah! I see. Hear another verse of that beautiful hymn:

"Come, holy spirit, heavenly dove,
With all thy quickening powers,
Come, shed abroad *a Saviour's love*,
And THAT shall kindle ours."

If there were any mystery, it is now solved. The love of Jesus, shed abroad in our hearts, will create love within us. We do not need the fire of hell to make us love God; it never can produce such an effect. The fire of hell is the fire of rancor and hate; and it cannot produce love. We need a purifying coal from the altar of God, — such as was applied to the prophet's lips, which took his iniquity away, and purged his sin. This is the fire of heaven, — the fire of love:

"In our cold hearts, O strike a spark!
Of that pure flame which seraphs feel;
Nor let us wander in the dark,
Or lie benumbed and stupid still.
Come, vivifying spirit, come,
And make our hearts thy constant home."

Love is the essence of all pure religion, — love to God, and love to man. The first, and great

commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and the second is like unto it, viz., Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." There can be no pure religion without it; no grace of the spirit, no approbation of God. But we must be very careful, that we obey the *second* commandment as well as the *first*. Young Christians are sometimes quite ready to say they love God, as though they might say this, with great propriety, if they thought of nothing else they might say as a proof of their advancement in the Christian life. Sometimes, at religious meetings, when the clergyman urges the young, with great earnestness, to rise and speak of their experience in religious things, they will say, "I have not much to offer, but I think I can say, *I love God;*" as if this might be said with less reflection than anything else. Now, in truth, there is nothing that requires greater heart-searching than the inquiry, Do we love God? And before we answer that question affirmatively, let us be sure we love our fellow-men; for God will sooner excuse us for neglecting to love Him, than for neglecting to love one another. Hear the opinion of the eminent Apostle John,

in this matter: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" 1 John iv. 20. "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." There is great force and beauty in the parable, so beautifully paraphrased by Leigh Hunt:

> "Abon Ben Adem, (may his tribe increase,)
> Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
> And saw within the moonlight of his room,
> Making it rich, and like a lily bloom,
> An angel writing in a book of gold.
> Exceeding peace had made Ben Adem bold;
> And to the presence in the room he said,
> 'What writest thou?' The vision raised its head,
> And with a look made all of sweet accord,
> Replied, 'the names of those who love the Lord.'"

That was what he wrote, "The names of those who love the Lord."

> "And is mine one," said Abon. "Nay, not so,"
> Replied the angel; Abon spoke more low,
> But cheerfully, and said, "I pray thee then,
> Write mine as one that loves his fellow men."

If he could not have his name go down in that golden book as that of a man who loved God, he

sought the next rank, viz: to have it go down "as one that loves his fellow men."

"The angel wrote—and vanished! The next night,
He came again, with a great wakening light;
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! BEN ADEM'S NAME LED ALL THE REST."

Fourth. We come now to the fourth particular in which charity is greater than faith, or hope, and this is the last that we shall name—*It is of endless duration.* Faith and hope belong to earth, but will not exist in heaven. Charity shall live in heaven, and shall never die. That high Christian virtue abides now on the earth with faith and hope; but faith and hope will not abide in heaven with charity. In the presence of the Infinite One, faith shall be lost in sight, hope shall be swallowed up in fruition; but charity shall shine with more than terrestrial glory.

"The morning star is lost in light;
Faith vanishes at perfect sight;
The rainbow passes with the storm,
And hope with sorrow's fading form:
But charity, serene, sublime,
Beyond the reach of death and time,
Like the blue sky's all-bounding space,
Holds heaven and earth in its embrace."

God will be in heaven, and he is love. Jesus will be there, and his spirit is the spirit of love. The atmosphere of heaven is love. The angels dwell in love; and the spirits of all who shall be raised to the immortal state, will be filled with love.

"No strife nor envy there,
The sons of peace molest;
But harmony and love sincere
Fill every happy breast."

May we so continually contemplate this blissful scene, that it shall beget within us a heavenly mind.

"Oh! may this prospect fire
Our hearts with ardent love!
And lively faith and pure desire
Bear ev'ry thought above."

Let us, while in this mortal state, cherish faith in God, in all his promises. Let us not be turned away from his word. Let us keep our faith pure, and do all that lies in our power to keep the faith of our fellow men pure. Then they will have a cheering, purifying hope, which otherwise they cannot possess. "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of

perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." Col. iii. 14–17.

Engraved by A.B. Walter at J.M. Butler's Establishment 84 Chestnut St. Philad.ª

M. T. Ballou

SERMON XII.

CHRIST'S SACRIFICE.

BY REV. MOSES BALLOU.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."—1 PETER iii. 18.

FOR what were the sufferings and death of Christ?

The Church has given us three answers to this question, viz.,

1st. They were a *substitute* for those of the sinner.

2d. They were designed to appease the anger, and placate the wrath of God.

3d. They were designed to vindicate the honor of the divine law.

It is well known that we reject the sentiments involved in these replies. We believe that nothing of this kind can be harmonized, either with the dictates of reason, or the teachings of

revelation. Those, therefore, who have held these opinions, have made the inquiry a somewhat anxious one. They have asked us, on the supposition that these replies were incorrect, For what did Jesus suffer and die? In what are we to look for its necessity? What purposes did his sacrifice serve to aid? Where are the advantages to be derived from it? And how shall that large class of passages be interpreted, which speak of Christ, as "being made a curse for us?" Gal. iii. 13, as bearing "our sins in his own body on the tree?" 1 Peter ii. 24, and suffering "for sins, the *just* for the *unjust?*" 1 Peter iii. 18.

I. In the first place, the death of Christ was the closing up of the whole system of legal offerings which the Jews, by divine appointment, had observed under the old dispensations.

No small part of the religion, instituted through the mediation of Moses, consisted in its *sacrifices.* These, though of many kinds, and required to be offered under a great variety of circumstances, you will find, if you examine them carefully, are never spoken of as affecting, in the least degree, or designed to affect, the Supreme Being; *but*

seem "to have been required as the symbols of the temper of mind — the tokens of the moral feelings of those who offered them." *

One fact alone seems to settle this question, viz., that a sacrifice was, or was not, acceptable to the Divine Being, just according to the motives, feelings, principles, and disposition of the person or persons who gave it. Hence, the same offering was sometimes approved, and sometimes rejected, from the same person; and hence, too, the same thing occurred when the offering was made by different individuals. Everything depended on the spirit and temper of the offerer, whether the service was acceptable and satisfactory.

Now, this whole Jewish system, Christ abolished. He introduced an entirely new dispensation. His blood became the *seal* of the new covenant, as the blood of the Jewish offerings had been the seal of the old; and his death, under the gospel dispensation, of which that of High Priest under the law was a type, was the closing up, and finishing of all the long list of sacrificial offerings.

* Rev. S. R. Smith.

This you will find fully explained in the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters of St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews.

I do not regard this, by any means, as the *main object* of the death of Christ, or as furnishing the principal reason for that great event; but his death, having been called for by other good and sufficient considerations, as I shall show you, answered this purpose, also. It appropriately ended the Mosaic dispensation. All its sacrificial offerings were merged in, and swallowed up, by that of Christ.

II. I regard the sufferings and death of Christ, as, in a very important sense, those of a martyr.

This sacrifice of himself, he could not well have avoided, without being untrue to the high purposes of his mission. His publicly announcing and defending the great truths of his religion, had given mortal offence to the Jews. He had told them of the abrogation of their long-cherished and dearly-loved system.

Their splendid ritual, he had announced, must pass away. The long line of their illustrious and venerated priesthood, the gorgeous temple-

worship at Jerusalem, everything which they held sacred, except merely the moral laws of God, and even their national existence, all were to be blotted out; and, like an unsubstantial pageant, faded,

——"Leave not a wreck behind."

The High Priest, Scribes, and Pharisees, were almost frantic with rage. They were clamorous for his very heart's blood. And there was but one of three things before him: 1st. He must either retract the position he had chosen, give up the interests of the cause he had espoused, and leave the world in its darkness and sin, or, 2d, he must encounter his enemies by physical force, or, lastly, he must go forward like a true moral hero, bearing all, and suffering all, and sealing his mission, at last, with the martyr's blood. The first, of course, he would not do. He had fully counted the cost before he commenced his work. He had began an enterprise, from which there was to be no shrinking, no turning back. And to have adopted the second, would have amounted essentially to the same

thing. It would have been a violation of his own most noble precepts, and setting a striking example of disobedience to his own laws.

His death was the only alternative.

He chose rather to suffer and die, than to be untrue, for a single moment, to the great work of the world's redemption. He gave his life freely to the cause he loved — nobly perished in the way of duty — and, in this respect, his death was that of a martyr.

III. This brings me to remark, that the sacrifice of Christ was an attestation of the truths he taught, and of the divinity of his mission.

Had Jesus been an impostor, knowingly and intentionally, we should naturally expect to find him, at least, using some efforts to keep himself out of any very serious personal difficulty. We should hardly look for his risking much of his own comfort, or taking upon himself voluntarily much suffering.

If he were not, as he claimed to be, the long looked-for Messiah, having the basis of his authority in the express will of God, — had he not perfect truth on which to rest his claims, he

would have been most likely to avoid, as far as he had ability, all those severer trials to which he submitted, and sought, in some way, his own private interest and advantage. At least, he would not have taken the cup of death so meekly and resignedly, and quaffed it to the very dregs, in the most uncomplaining submission.

Indeed, it only wanted a manifest effort, on his part, to avoid all personal sacrifice, to render powerless, in a great degree, the whole proofs of his claims to a divine appointment.

Had the world seen him shrink when brought to the trial, — had the people seen him managing with art and shrewdness, to keep out of the way of harm himself, it would have thrown suspicion on his claims in a moment. Had he endeavored to shun the officers, who were sent to arrest him, or tried, in any way, to escape the awful doom he saw before him, it would have been said at once, especially to all except his warmest friends, that he had little sincerity or devotion to what he professed; that, after all, he was no divine messenger, who must do his duty, at all hazards; and it would have been immediately seized upon, and used to his discredit. But so far from this,

he told his followers frankly, long beforehand, that he must suffer many things at the hands of the Jews, and finally be put to death; and there was no apparent effort or struggle made from the beginning to avoid this terrible doom. He might easily have taken himself out of Judea into some of the neighboring countries, or kept himself secreted from the power of his foes, or certainly he might have made the attempt to do so, or in some way, tried to avoid his fate, had he wished to do it; but no traces of such an effort can be found connected with his whole history.

To be sure, there were some instances in which he cautioned his disciples against exposing him to his enemies, but this was only because he had not accomplished his work, or, as the record expresses it, because his hour had not come; but when it did come, he made no attempt to evade or shun it, and even severely rebuked Peter, for endeavoring to shield or defend him. "Put up thy sword in its sheath," says he; "the cup which my Heavenly Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Here, then, was the highest proof that he could possibly give of his sincerity, and deep devotion.

He had announced himself as the Son of God. He had told his followers that God had sent him; that he was no mere selfish speculator, building up a system of his own, but doing a great work for the Father, doing it at *his* will, and at *his* bidding, and that there was no choice, on his part, but to carry it through, even though he perished in the attempt.

I say, that Jesus had *professed* all this. He had plainly announced it from the beginning; and now, the meek and unswerving fidelity with which he gave himself up to his awful fate, testified, as with a voice from heaven, that he was honest and sincere in these declarations, and that deep in his own soul, he felt the reality of the solemn truths he had uttered.

With these proofs of his entire purity and devotion, I am willing to accept gratefully his divine testimony. I am willing to receive his declarations as coming directly from the Father. For he must have known absolutely, whether his claims were well founded; and when you prove his sincerity, you prove the truth and divinity of his mission.

Here, then, was another important object

accomplished in the sufferings and death of Christ. They were a solemn attestation of the validity of his claims to the Divine Sonship.

IV. Another fact that made the sacrifice of Christ necessary, was, that it served to develop all the higher beauties and glories of his personal character, and render him an exalted and perfect example for us, and for the world, in all ages.

The eminent and profound Dr. Spurzheim, from his clear insight of the facts of human nature, and keen and discriminating observation, seemed to think that an intimate acquaintance with, and a somewhat deep participation in human suffering, was a necessary element in purifying, elevating, and perfecting a truly noble and beautiful character! He would not, of course, suppose that the genius of the best and most exalted were not wrapped up in the hearts of many who had never passed the fiery ordeal of tribulation; but that, in all such, they were latent, or dormant; that they needed the stern influence of trials and sufferings, to call them out, and develop their full and vigorous growth; and true to this idea,

he said, that if he were to select a wife, — if I remember rightly, — he would go among those of this class; he would not take one on whom the unclouded sun of prosperity and joy had ever rested; but one who was familiar with the severer aspects of human life; — one nursed in trials, trained in sorrows, and disciplined by a deep personal experience in human woes.

All of you, I doubt not, who have ever reflected much upon such subjects, will see that he recognized a *principle* here which is entirely correct.

Life is indeed a great school, in which pain and suffering are severe, but necessary teachers. The giant oak, through whose branches the storms of an hundred years have rushed in their fury, has attained its vigor and maturity, quite as much by the wintry blast as by the summer sunshine; and to all outward or physical nature, night, and frost, and darkness, and tempest, may be as essential as light, and heat, and balmy air.

This fact finds its close analogy in the moral life of man. An uninterrupted condition of health, prosperity, and joy, may tend to encourage the milder virtues, though they too often give

occasion to pride, and self-confidence, and vain caprices. Yet they cannot develop the sterner virtues. They cannot call out the higher traits of our manhood.

The nobler principles of fortitude, and patience, and forbearance, and trustfulness, and forgiveness, — these require another, and a different atmosphere, for their perfect growth. They spring up best amidst pains, and sickness, and trials, and watchings, and the wrongs and hate of the world. It is so with all the better elements of moral heroism.

The very idea of a *hero* implies one who has boldly met the encounter, and nobly won the victory; not one, merely, who has never had a foe to meet, or a battle to fight. As there cannot be the highest virtue without the greatest temptation, so there cannot be the most exalted moral heroism, without surmounting the greatest moral trials.

Now, I would apply these remarks to the personal character of Christ. I would maintain that, had he never been called to suffer deeply, — had he not experienced trials such as mortal man never encountered before, he could not have

have been, as I rejoice to regard him now, the greatest, the noblest, and the bravest moral hero, that the history of the world ever exhibited!

Let us take a few instances, as examples of this, that will serve, perhaps, to illustrate the fact more clearly.

How could Jesus have given us such a striking example of fearless confidence in the power of truth, if he had not committed its interests to the rude conflicts of the world with a calm serenity, that foretold its ultimate triumph?

How could he have given us an example of fidelity to duty, without adhering to it faithfully, through all difficulties himself?

Where could we have found an instance of patient endurance of wrong, — a forbearance, that no personal abuse could overcome, — a fortitude, that no terrors could shake, and a forgiveness, that beamed out even in the agonies of death, — had not Jesus encountered trials, that enabled him to exhibit them all?

And is not such a glorious example needed by us? Has it not, oftentimes, given new strength and vigor to the very best of us?

I feel that it is so. I feel the deep necessity of it in my own heart. I want some such striking exhibition of moral power to encourage me. When I encounter the wrongs of the world in my own little experience, or when strifes, or sorrows, or woes assail me, I can look back upon that patient and suffering martyr, who encountered more than all these for my sake, and I feel the better and stronger for it. I can bear far more easily the little burthen allotted to me, when I see Christ enduring all things for duty, for God, and for humanity!

V. Christ's sacrifice was necessary "to bring *life* and *immortality* to light." True, he had plainly and emphatically taught the doctrine during his brief ministry. He had told the caviling Sadducees, that there was an *anastasis*, a resurrection from the dead; and that, in that state, all were to become as the angels of God in heaven. He had even given the most striking proofs of his power over death, in the resurrection of Lazarus, and the son of the widow of Nain. Repeated experiments had shown that he had ability to unlock the grave's hidden secrets,

and give back the dead again to life, light, and joy.

But all this was not enough. It did not even convince his disciples: for not one of them believed that he would rise again, when he was laid in the new tomb of Joseph.

Not till they had actually seen him again among the living,—conversed with him, handled him, and examined the proofs of his identity, were they fully convinced of the truths he had told them. And, I ask you, whether the testimony for another life would not seem defective, without that crowning evidence, — the demonstration of it in the personal experience of the Master? To me, it would have been highly so, and I think that it would to the world at large.

There was needed precisely such an illustrious example as he gave; an example, under circumstances, of all others, the most unfavorable to imposture. His own testimony alone, would have left much at which to cavil. He might have been honest and sincere, and still tinged with enthusiasm. And the cases in which he is said to have raised the dead, would have been far from sufficient confirmation; because they were instances

chosen from private and humble life. They were miracles, performed only in the presence of comparatively a few, and these principally friends. They were not cases, in which great pains were taken to avoid the possibility of collusion or fraud. And though I do not doubt now the evangelical statement of the facts, yet I might have done so, without the subsequent proof of the resurrection of Christ. This was precisely what the necessities of the case demanded. In his case, everything was done that could be done by mortal power, to prevent the possibility of imposture. The individual was one to whom all eyes were directed.

He was put to death regularly by the officers of the law, and the work, being done by enemies, was doubtless done thoroughly. Then he was placed in a new tomb, hewn from a rock, with no possible chance for escape but through the door. And on this door was impressed the official seal of the government, and the additional precaution taken to roll a large stone against it. And, as though they would leave no room for the shadow of a doubt in regard to the reality of his resurrection, they stationed a guard of soldiers to watch

the sepulchre, — men trained to the most rigid discipline, and whose lives were forfeited, if they betrayed their trust.

Here, then, were all the precautions adopted, that human skill could devise, to insure us against the possibility of deception; and yet, on the morning of the third day, the bars of the tomb were found rent asunder; the great stone rolled away; the clothes in which they wrapped him, empty; and an angelic being pointed them to heaven, with the solemn declaration, "He is not here — he is risen!"

I repeat it, — that this great seal was necessary to the full proofs of another life; and this, of course, could not have been given, without the personal sacrifice of Christ.

VI. But, notwithstanding the importance of these objects, realized by the sufferings and death of Jesus, there was still another purpose which it served, of equal, if not greater, magnitude. I *mean, its manifestation of the love of God.*

Nothing can be more evident, than that Jesus designed to make this the first, and most prominent, of all the truths he taught to the world.

That men were lost in sin, — that they had all gone astray; and yet, that God still loved them; that he could not bear to see them perish; that he wished to gain their affections, and win their hearts to himself; and that, to this end, Christ had come to seek and save them; that the Father's kindness had prompted all this, and that his mission was an undeniable proof of the Father's affection, are among the plainest facts in all the New Testament. "*God so loved the world*, that he sent his only begotten Son." "*God commendeth* HIS LOVE towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, *Christ died for us.*"

Words cannot substantiate anything more fully than these do the fact, that the sufferings and death of Christ were designed to reveal to us the love of God, and to give the highest confirmation of this truth within the reach of his power.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Yes; this was the strongest proof that God himself could offer us. To send his Son, to labor, suffer, bleed, and die for us, that we might live; that our hearts might be turned to him, and repose on

his gracious assurances of mercy; this was the crowning effort of Almighty goodness.

More could not be done for this purpose. And with all these facts before us, can any one press the question further, "*How or in what sense*, did Christ die *for us?* *How* did he bare our sins in his own body? or suffer the *just*, for the *unjust*?

It seems as though a child could answer these questions now. Is it not written in Matt. viii. 17, "*Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses*?" In what sense pray? Why merely in sympathizing with these sufferings, and in efforts to relieve them; and there is the same evidence that Christ was *infirm* and *sick for us* in some strange and mystical manner, as there is to prove that he bare our sins in some such way.

The simple truth is, that *our sins* were what made the Christian dispensation necessary; and Christ's labors, sufferings, sacrifices and death, as a part of that dispensation, were all necessary *for us*; for our redemption, and reconciliation to God. See context. "It is better," says the apostle: "if the will of God be so, that *ye* suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, for *Christ also hath once* suffered in the same way? Hence

Christ's sufferings are set forth *as an example* to us—"because Christ also suffered for us leaving us an example."

Every philanthropist, or lover of his race, who toils and suffers for humanity, for its moral improvement and reformation; may with propriety be said, so far, to bear the sins of humanity; to suffer the *just* for the *unjust*. And in this same sense, Christ died for us; died to bless us; to turn us from our iniquities, to reconcile us to God, and to bring us in penitence and love to the Father's house from whence we have wandered.

If it be said that I degrade the character and office of Christ, by supposing that the nature and object of his sacrifice does not differ materially from that of every good man, who labors and suffers for others welfare; excepting only that Christ did more than any other man.

I answer, that it is beyond the range of my conception to embrace a good, greater than that for which Jesus toiled and suffered. The human soul is beyond all price. It is of infinite value. It is the likeness of the great and good Being who made it. It must live when all that we see around has passed away. Yes, when the heavens have

rolled together as a scroll,—when the sun shall have been darkened, and the moon fail to give her light,—when all the shining hosts of heaven have faded out in nothingness; the soul of man shall live on in beauty and glory forever; so long as the throne of God shall endure, it must remain; and to fit it to dwell in love and purity, to make it the abode of the bliss of heaven, is worthy the noblest efforts of Jesus,—worthy of the wisdom and goodness of Jehovah!

BX9943.A1U5 1853
Twelve sermons delivered during the
Andover-Harvard 000003046
3 2044 077 905 115